WILMA ABELES IGGERS

KARL KRAUS

A Viennese Critic of the Twentieth Century

MARTINUS NIJHOFF / THE HAGUE

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He began to understand these forces only when they destroyed his world in an important sense. His work having a considerable impact on the public, he became the object of an intense personality cult.

Kraus was almost forgotten until the second half of the 1940's except by small groups of Central European Jewish refugees. Since then there has been a Kraus renaissance which may not yet have reached its zenith. Ironically, this wave of interest is due to an aspect his contemporaries predicted would limit his influence to those sharing the same ethnic background — his language.

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Wilma Abeles Iggers. Born in Czechoslovakia; came to Canada in 1938 and finished High School there; studied at the University of Chicago (M.A. 1943 and Ph.D. 1952). Has been teaching at colleges and universities since 1946. At present teaching German at Dillard University

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KARL KRAUS

A VIENNESE CRITIC OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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BY

WILMA ABELES IGGERS

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1967

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To my husband

FOREWORD

At no time did Vienna play a greater role in the intellectual and artistic life of the German speaking peoples and of Europe than in the first three decades of the present century. It was the home of Mahler and Schönberg, of Hofmannsthal and Schnitzler, of Mach and Wittgenstein, of Freud and of Austro-Marxism. Less known outside the German-speaking world was Karl Kraus, whose whole work was inseparably connected with the Vienna of his time and who, perhaps for this reason, may seem today more "provincial" than the others whom we have just named.

Kraus was an apocalyptic moralist: The titles of some of his more important works unmistakably reveal it: "The last days of mankind"; "The day of judgment" (*Weltgericht*); "The end of the world by black magic" (*Untergang der Welt durch die schwarze Magie*). Like Kierkegaard, he was a witness against his time. But the symbolic object of the time against which Kraus bore witness was of an infinitely minor quality than Kierkegaard's. He did not attack the church of his country or the Christianity of his days; his main target was the Viennese press, a target of quickly passing importance, of which little remains today.

Kraus was a master of satirical invective and of the German language, which he regarded as his most precious inheritance (*Ahnenerbe*). He felt a deep sense of responsibility for the proper use of the language. His concern was never primarily a political, but a moralistic one, which explains why his aggressiveness was frequently so violent and was directed against ephemeral and unessential "evils", so much so that a present-day reader will find much in Kraus's writings that, after only thirty years, has become irrelevant or incomprehensible.

Kraus had many fervent admirers in the Vienna of his time, and his famous "readings" of his favorite plays – Shakespeare, Johann Nestroy, Jacques Offenbach – carried his reputation far beyond Vienna. Yet a proper analytical evaluation of Kraus' work and person-

ality has so far been missing. It is the great merit of Mrs. Iggers' book to have undertaken such a detailed analysis. Though she approaches Kraus and his problems, as far as they are revealed in his work which always remains a personal work (*ichbezogen*), with a critical spirit and with a refreshing impartiality, and though she makes the reader aware of the many ambiguities of Kraus's personality and work, she fully appreciates his importance and his quite unique position in the Vienna of the first three decades of this century. There was no similar literary, cultural and moral figure anywhere in that time. Therefore, every student of the work of Karl Kraus and of the Vienna of his time, every lover of a fiercely independent personality and of a great and dedicated writer, will be indebted to Mrs. Iggers' work.

Fall 1966 HANS KOHN

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PREFACE

At the time this doctoral dissertation was written, some fifteen years ago, Kraus was known very little except among Central European Jewish refugees. They were, for the most part, sceptical of my undertaking, being convinced that nobody who has not "experienced" Kraus can truly understand him. They felt furthermore that no matter how universally true it was, some of Kraus's message was too much tied to his milieu and language to become part of the German-speaking literary heritage, of which, because of Hitler, there is no exact continuation.

It soon became evident that among those who had known Kraus there was hardly anyone who was lukewarm toward him; expressions were, for the most part, ecstatic or at least very positive on the one hand, or emphatically negative on the other. It was perhaps this above all, the opportunity to arrive at a personal decision about someone who within a limited sphere was so controversial and who at the same time was virtually unknown to the larger reading public that made me undertake this study of Kraus. While I was aware of the importance of sharing Kraus's linguistic and cultural background, I felt that, except for the shift of one generation, I had the advantage of both. Since I completed my thesis, there has been a gradual increase of interest in Kraus. Dissertations were and are being written, especially in Austria, but also in Germany, France and America. Articles continue to appear in journals, including some of the most prominent ones, and in some cases several articles on the same aspect of Kraus's work. For the first time, essays on Kraus have been appearing in collections, and considerable space has been given to him in new histories of literature, as well as in revised editions of older ones. Suddenly Kraus anniversaries are being celebrated, and the city of Vienna has opened its Kraus archives; in the early fifties, the Kösel-Verlag in Munich started to publish volumes of selections of Kraus's work, including the posthumous *Die*

dritte Walpurgisnacht, which even the most enthusiastic Krausians had been convinced would never see the light of day. Some volumes have even appeared in paperback editions. There have been television programs on Kraus in Germany and Austria, new editions of Kraus records, and even – entirely counter to Kraus's expressed wishes – a production of *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* on the stage in Vienna.

It is difficult to say what brought on this Kraus renaissance. I am sceptical of the suggestion offered that the Kraus vogue is part of a larger one of philo-semitism which will recede as emotions become more balanced, and that Kraus along with others will thereafter be judged more objectively. (Why would one celebrate a Jewish antisemite in this connection?) There has also been talk of a deliberate attempt to analyze all those writers who were neglected during the Nazi period.

Despite all the attention that has been paid to Kraus in the interval, I decided to publish my manuscript essentially unchanged. The quality and tenor of Kraus literature has not changed very much in the course of about two thirds of a century. It is still predominantly very laudatory, and still, somewhat less frequently, highly condemnatory. In 1920 Leopold Liegler published his *Karl Kraus und sein Werk*, the only full-length book about Kraus before the 1950's. While quite useful, especially for the understanding of the cultural background, this book, as well as Liegler's *Karl Kraus und die Sprache* (1918), seems more like a lofty-sounding eulogy than a sober attempt at analysis. Among the early writings about Kraus, Robert Scheu's *Karl Kraus* is useful for the clear picture it gives of Kraus's life and personality. There are also some well-written summaries of Kraus's publicistic and literary activities, and of his significance. The best of these earlier articles which, however, necessarily duplicate each other to some extent, are probably those by G. Goblot, F. Taucher, Ludwig Hänsel and Ludwig von Ficker. Among the articles containing overly emotional eulogies, there is especially Berthold Viertel's *Karl Kraus. Ein Charakter und die Zeit*, which is an interesting example of the many attempts at an imitation of Kraus's style, and Karl Kocmata's *Karl Kraus, der Krieg, und die Ausgeräucherten*. On the negative side of the ledger – i.e. negative in their evaluation of Kraus – several little volumes are interesting because one rarely encounters such violent emotion evoked by a writer. In Anton Kuh's *Der Affe Zarathustras*, Kraus is called a seducer of youth and "... the satanic, talented scion of the Jewish house, foaming decadent good-for-nothing, ambitious, self-righteous" (p. 52). The tone of

Bin Gorion's *Der Fackel Reiter* is also indicated by its very title. Now, 30 years after Kraus's death, there is still no comprehensive study of Kraus in English. A published Sorbonne dissertation, by Caroline Kohn, *Karl Kraus, écrivain et polémiste,* a revised German version of which appeared with Metzler in Strassburg is well written and supplies a wealth of interesting material but is, in my opinion, too uncritical of Kraus. Furthermore, it does not deal with certain aspects of Kraus at all, e.g. his view of the role of woman, and his attitude towards the Jews.

Werner Kraft's book, *Karl Kraus,* which is the best known, is actually a collection of essays, some of which touch Kraus only tangentially; as for instance the twenty-two page section about Otto Weininger. Most of Kraus's dramas are mentioned only in passing; his political views are discussed only briefly, under the heading of satire. Kraus's view of woman is spoken of only as related to Weininger's view. The Jewish problem, essential to the understanding of Kraus, appears only in so far as it concerns Jewish writers with whom Kraus deals in other connections: Heine, and again Weininger. The avoidance of the problem of Kraus's attitude toward his own Jewish background is quite general in the Kraus literature.

As for the extensive recent articles about Kraus, many are written in the style toward which a large part of modern German literary criticism has turned: the writers rely on intuitive "verstehen," rather than on the use of language as a means of rational communication. This is especially true of the articles by Günther Busch, Fritz Schalk, and of Joachim Stephan's book, all of which deal with Kraus's language and satire. It is also true to a large extent of the articles by Walter Benjamin, which stem from an earlier period.

Not only are the same aspects of Kraus discussed in many articles; often the same points are emphasized and the same quotations used. For example *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* by Erich Heller in his collection of essays, *The Disinherited Mind is* probably the only article about Kraus in English worthy of note. However, *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* is also analyzed in Mautner's article in *Das deutsche Drama des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts,* and probably most competently in Walter Muschg's *Von Trakl bis Brecht.*

Most interesting among the extensive article literature is Hennecke's *Einer gegen alle,* with its balanced presentation of a number of fresh points of view, and articles by Lotte Sternbach-Gärtner,[1] especially

[1] The German pseudonym of Caroline Kohn.

those in which she discusses the indebtedness of Brecht and the expressionists to Kraus.

Such articles are, however, in the minority. One finds much more frequently such things as fond reminiscences of Kraus (for which there is some justification as long as they are unpretentious) and would-be scholarly articles by authors who write out of the fog of their fondness for the Kraus of decades ago, not unlike the sentimentalists whose fondness for Heine made Kraus say: "man hatte die Masern und man hatte Heine." There are also articles containing misinformation concerning essential facts about Kraus, for which there is no justification. I decided to publish this volume because of its broad scope; because in it I tried to deal with all the important aspects of Kraus and to analyze, free from any mystique of language, what Kraus actually said about the world as he saw it. It was also my aim to characterize Kraus as a critic, since his work can be called a mirror which reflects essential aspects of Europe in a time of crisis. The reflection is, to be sure, anything but objective. It was in my opinion, however, worth studying because it was that of a Central European intellectual who, though in some ways typical of his time and place, was nevertheless unlike many of his fellows in that he had not lost his ability to distinguish between good and bad in a relativistic world, even though he did not adhere to an accepted dogma.

In translating German quotations, I have tried to stay as close to the original as is compatible with acceptable English style, and have retained the original German whenever I felt that it was important for reasons of style or meaning.

Finally, I would like to thank Mme. Caroline Kohn for reading the manuscript, for her many helpful suggestions, and for letting me use her bibliography; Professor Raymond Girard for checking the style of my translation of German quotations, and especially my husband, Georg Iggers, for letting me benefit from his judgment at every turn of the road.

Just as this manuscript was in the last stages of being prepared for the publisher, two new larger publications about Kraus appeared; one of them is *Karl Kraus*, a very readable, well-illustrated biography by Paul Schick, the keeper of the Kraus archives in Vienna. In spite of all its Kraus-worship, it is an honest book, and reveals the good use Schick made of his constant access to Krausiana. The other book which appeared in 1965 is Friedrich Jenaczek's *Zeittafeln der Fackel*. It consists essentially of a larger part, the *Zeittafeln* proper, an extended,

summarized and annotated table of contents, not only of *Die Fackel*, but also of Kraus' life, as well as the history of his works after Kraus's death. Although intended primarily as a scholarly tool, this section is not very helpful, since its topics are selected subjectively, and their organization is difficult to understand. This chart-like part stands in sharp contrast to the extensive introduction by Emil Schönauer which is perhaps the most extreme apotheosis of Kraus yet to appear.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION [1]

LIFE, WORK AND THOUGHT

Early Life. Karl Kraus was born in Jičín, Bohemia in 1874. His father, a well-to-do Jewish manufacturer, moved with his large family to Vienna when Karl was two years old. Because he was delicate and affected with curvature of the spine, the boy's pleasures were largely intellectual and artistic. Deviating from the family pattern of entering business, he compromised and studied law at the University of Vienna but soon changed over to literature, being especially interested in drama and performing in several plays. Before receiving a degree, he left the University and dedicated himself to free-lance writing for various publications, the most important of which were the *Neue Freie Presse, Simplicissimus, Die Wage,* and *Breslauer Zeitung.*

At that time he wrote mostly chatty but clever essays of literary criticism which as yet contained no trace of a program but were very annoying to certain groups.[2] His first independent publication in 1897 was a sharply satirical pamphlet, *Die demolierte Literatur* (The Demolition of Literature), [3] a parody on contemporary literary and artistic trends and on the adherents of the Viennese literary cliques. Because of this satire he first won local recognition.

Die Fackel. After the publication of *Eine Krone für Zion* (A Crown for Zion) in April, 1899, he began to write and publish *Die Fackel* (The Torch), a periodical which continued to appear until 1936. Kraus considered these small red booklets to be something like preliminary drafts of what he was finally going to consider fit for incorporation into his books. The history of *Die Fackel* is the history of Kraus's adult life; this periodical could be called his diary. As he became more and more independent of conventional ways of thinking and living, *Die Fackel*

[1] All German quotations in this book have been brought into conformity with contemporary orthography as exemplified in *Der Grosse Duden, Rechtschreibung,* XII, Leipzig, 1942.

[2] Robert Scheu, *Karl Kraus,* p. 4.

[3] Titles of works will be translated at their first occurrence.

also became a less and less conventional periodical. This could be seen in the mere outward fact of his changing its schedule of three monthly appearances to "at least three times a year." Also, whereas in the first years of *Die Fackel,* Kraus disciplined himself into preserving a somewhat regular pattern of subject matter for his articles, later he would publish after perhaps several months of silence, one five- or sixfold *Fackel,* all of it devoted to a single topic such as the annihilation of one literary figure.

In its first years, *Die Fackel* was somewhat of a platform to which Kraus invited and welcomed comments from readers, and for a time there appeared in it contributions by contemporaries [1] many of whom Kraus helped to make famous: Frank Wedekind, Else Lasker-Schüler, Peter Altenberg, Albert Ehrenstein, and in different fields, Wilhelm Liebknecht and Adolf Loos.[2] By the end of 1911 Kraus wrote *Die Fackel* entirely by himself.

It has been said that Kraus developed from a social to a cultural critic during the first decade of *Die Fackel.* This is true insofar as there can be observed a tendency toward greater broadness and generalization within the same organically unified work. Kraus manifested a constantly increasing awareness of the symbolic significance of the individual case. So he seems to have called attention to smaller and smaller misdeeds, while actually concentrating on fewer and fewer of the real evils which encompassed his world. Kraus also became even more of a skeptic as time went on. Although he was never in the least gullible, I doubt very much whether in the early years he would have questioned the genuineness of Tolstoy's primitive Christianity, as he did later in *Literatur und Lüge.*[3]

Lectures. Kraus was very much an actor at heart – this can be seen clearly in his style. It has often been pointed out that his physical deformity prevented him from choosing acting as a career. Actually, more importantly, he was too independent to subject himself to the will of authors, theater directors and producers, and also was allegedly a failure on the stage in his early days. However, he arrived at the medium which was ideally suited to him, when, shortly before the first World

[1] Contributors: Liliencron, Peter Hille, Wedekind, Strindberg, Chekhov, Wilde, Machar, Langer, Altenberg, Stoessl, Soyka, Thaddaeus Rittner, K. B. Heinrich, Stanislaw Przybyszewski, Karl Hauer, Margarete Beutler; Kraus assisted Viertel, Heinrich Mann, Trakl, Werfel, Ehrenstein, Bleibtreu, Harden, H. S. Chamberlain, and others. (Cf. Edwin Rollett, *Karl Kraus* (Wien, 1934), p. 14.)

[2] Posthumously Friedrich Kürnberger, David Spitzer, and Otto Weininger.

[3] *Literatur und Lüge* (Vienna, 1929), p. 62.

War, Kraus began to give what were modestly called "lecture evenings."[1] During those evenings, he usually read items which were to appear in future numbers of *Die Fackel*, but more and more frequently he dedicated whole evenings to the presentation of works of art. Thus, Kraus, with the aid of only a piano soloist, sitting behind a small table on a stage, would "perform" scenes from Goethe's *Faust* or *Pandora* or whole plays by Shakespeare, Wedekind, Hauptmann, Nestroy, or Raimund. One list of lecture programs from *Die Fackel* of June, 1924,[2] contained the following: his own version of Aristophanes' *Birds*, Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*, some poems from his *Worte in Versen* (Words in Verse), part of *Faust II*, his *Traumstück* (Dream Play), and Goethe's conversations about Helena from Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe*. Another time he recited Nestroy's *Das Notwendige und das Überflüssige* (The Necessary and the Superfluous) with additional verses of his own on timely topics, as well as a poem satirizing the theatergoing public and a speech of his own about Peter Altenberg. Further themes taken from lectures of about the same time, which may be called that of his prime, were: Hauptmann's *Die Weber* (The Weavers), a poem by Baudelaire, Kraus's own *Heine und die Folgen* (Heine and the Consequences), an essay on expressionism and contemporary art, Schiller's *Die Räuber* (The Robbers), a polemic essay about the Austrian republic, a note on etymology, a poem of his own satirizing the old monarchy, and smaller items satirizing such contemporary German writers as Bahr, Dehmel, and Hofmannsthal, and the journalist Grossmann. Other lectures contained passages on such varied themes as Börne, Mussolini, Ebner-Eschenbach, Kraus's *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (The Last Days of Mankind), psychoanalysis, and the twenty-fifth-year celebration of *Die Fackel*.

Another time he spoke of war, militarism, and the contemporary political situation, recited a play by Raimund, a poem by Liliencron, a short sketch by Altenberg, some poems by Wedekind, a satire of his own, the often-repeated *Das Ehrenkreuz* (The Cross of Honor) (Kraus's indictment of the current view of prostitution), and *Faust*. An especially popular "number" of Kraus's was his first polemic essay of protest

[1] Contrary to what was claimed by some of Kraus's detractors, e.g. Franz Blei, the proceeds from Kraus's lectures were given to a large variety of worthy causes; the pertinent information was usually published in *Die Fackel*. Thus, for example: "The complete proceeds for the starving children of Steyr ... and for the Republican Protective League of Wieden and Favoriten." (suburbs of Vienna). *Die Fackel.*, 712–16 (Ende Januar 1926), 42.

(In the references to *Die Fackel*, the first set of arabic numerals refers to volume numbers, the second set to page numbers.)

[2] *Die Fackel*, 649–56 (Juni 1934), 71f.

against the war *In dieser grossen Zeit* (In this Great Time). When it was recited for the first time on November 14, 1914, it was followed by quotations from Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Evangelist, and Liliencron. Indeed, Kraus often quoted "authorities" to express his own already known views in their words.

The impression made by the early Kraus and *Die Fackel* has been described frequently, and especially vividly by Robert Scheu.[1] Of the many descriptions of the young lecturer Kraus, however, the one which most fully captures what appears to me to be his essence is that by Karin Michaelis:

> ... Alle Lichter sind verlöscht. Nur da oben auf dem grün bekleideten Tisch leuchten zwei vereinzelte Kerzen. Sie funkeln unheimlich. Nun kommt Kraus. Jung, mit langen unbeherrschten Gliedern, scheu wie eine Fledermaus eilt er an den Tisch, verschanzt sich bang hinter ihm, kreuzt die Beine, streicht sich über die Stirn, putzt sich die Nase, sammelt sich wie ein Raubtier zum Sprunge, lauscht, wartet, öffnet den Mund wie zum Biss, klappt ihn wieder zu, wartet.
>
> Ein unendlich sanftes, unendlich trauriges Lächeln bebt über sein Gesicht. Eine flüchtige, vornehme, scheue Freude schmilzt alle Strenge in diesem jungen, geistvollen, verbitterten Antlitz. Seine nervösen Hände fahren über die mitgebrachten Arbeiten. Er fängt an, hart, nachdenklich, energisch, bezwingend, durch Überzeugung bezwingend. Hätte er chinesisch oder persisch gesprochen, man wäre mit der gleichen Spannung gefolgt. Seine eigene innere Glut wirkt wie der Funke einer vorbeirasenden Lokomotive auf die sommerdürre Prairie umher: alles flammt auf, während er spricht ... Er macht eine Pause und eilt hinaus. Eilt, flüchtet – sein Schatten zeichnet sich riesengross auf der Hinterwand des Saales – und verschwindet hinter einem Vorhang... [2]

Later on in the twenties and thirties, Kraus, who could neither sing nor read a note, chanted entire Offenbach operettas to the great enthusiasm of musical experts such as Ernst Křenek and Mechtilde Lichnowsky. His lectures took him to many countries of Europe, predominantly to

[1] Scheu, pp. 4ff.

[1] ... All the lights have been extinguished. Only two candles shed their light up there on the green-covered table. They sparkle uncannily. Now comes Kraus. Young, with long, uncontrolled limbs, shy as a bat he hurries to the table, makes it a barricade in front of him, crosses his legs, strokes his forehead, blows his nose, collects himself like an animal of prey ready to leap, listens, waits, opens his mouth as if to bite, shuts it again, waits.

An infinitely gentle, infinitely sad smile trembles over his face. A fleeting, distinguished, shy joy melts all severity in his young, spiritual yet embittered face. His nervous hands pass over the papers before him. He begins sternly, thoughtfully, energetically, compellingly, compelling through conviction. If he had spoken Chinese or Persian, one would have followed him with the same tension. His own inner fire had the same effect as the spark from a locomotive speeding by on a prairie after a summer draught, everything flares up while he speaks... He pauses and hurries outside. He hurries, flees – his shadow is gigantic on the back wall and disappears behind a curtain ...

Quoted in Leopold Liegler, *Karl Kraus und sein Werk*, p. 405 from the Copenhagen "Zeitung" of November 14, 1911.

Germany, Czechoslovakia, France, and Hungary,[1] but he nevertheless led a very secluded life.

Associates. Most of the early contributors to *Die Fackel* attained only temporary local fame.[2] For instance, Kraus prophesied a great future for Otto Stoessl, but he passed into oblivion and is now known only to small circles. Among the young poets encouraged by Kraus, Werfel became famous after Kraus had turned against him. Although Wedekind's reputation was definitely aided by Kraus's support, he had reached approximately the peak of his popularity when Kraus became interested in his work and thereafter his contemporaries gradually lost interest in him. At that time Kraus's most carefully watched *protégée* was indubitably Else Lasker-Schüler, whom he called

> ... die stärkste und unwegsamste lyrische Erscheinung des modernen Deutschland ... wunderschön ... gehört ... zu den entzückendsten und ergreifendsten ...[3]

Just as Kraus himself was enthusiastic about certain writers, many ardent worshippers extolled him until almost the end of his life, but he "used them up," shook them off, and ruined them for relatively small misdeeds often at the very time when they believed him to be a close friend.

Escapism in the Thirties. As clouds began to gather over the Austrian political horizon during the rise of Hitler, Kraus gradually began to turn away from contemporary events and to find consolation in reworking and translating literary works. Especially from 1930 on Kraus created for himself a world of his own through his occupation with the works of Goethe, Shakespeare, Nestroy, Raimund, Aristophanes, Wedekind, and others. Most of all, however, he was absorbed in translating, producing, performing and adding timely verses to little-known as well as standard repertoire operettas of Offenbach.[4] In fact, Kraus was probably right in claiming that he was responsible for the whole

[1] So, for instance, of the five hundred lectures held up to August 1929, 313 had been held in Vienna, sixty-eight in Berlin, thirty-one in Prague, ten in Munich, ten in Paris, nine in Hamburg, eight in Brünn, four in Graz, four in Innsbruck, four in Zurich, three in Karlsbad, three in Teplitz, and two each in the following cities: Bielitz, Budapest, Czernowitz, Dresden, Frankfurt a. M., Mährisch-Ostrau, Neustrelitz, Pressburg, Trieste; also Aachen, Aussig, Dortmund, etc. (*Die Fackel*, 811–19 (Anfang August 1929), 38). In 1925 and again in 1927 and 1928 he lectured several times at the Sorbonne.

[2] The early death as war casualities of some, like Franz Janowitz and Franz Grüner may be partially responsible for this.

[3] ... the strongest and most inaccessible lyric phenomenon of modern Germany-marvellously beautiful ... among the most delightful and most moving ... *Die Fackel*, 313–14 (31 Dezember 1910), 36.

[4] Published in 1931 als *Zeitstrophen* (Timely Verse).

German Offenbach renaissance, a movement which is known to the public largely through the well-known director, Max Reinhardt, whose techniques Kraus very much disliked.

In the 1930's, Kraus's work, at least in so far as it was published, decreased considerably in volume. Retiring into himself even more than before, he edited a volume of prose sketches by Altenberg, worked on an edition of his own collected essays about language, and was silent for many months at a time. His translations of Shakespeare's sonnets appeared in 1933, and toward the end of his life, his adaptations of Shakespeare's dramas became more frequent.

In the present chapter, as well as in the later one on the Jewish problem I shall discuss Kraus's attitudes of those years to some extent. This should be done for still another reason: Kraus's last years coincided with the first three years of Nazi rule in Germany and therefore an analysis of the former is also bound to contain his reaction to the latter. At the same time one must bear in mind that if Kraus objected to the Nazis for any reason other than their being an expression of the supremacy of regimentation and machine over spirit, it was chiefly for their maltreatment of groups and particularly of Jews rather than for their totalitarianism.[1]

That last phase of Kraus's life is ignored by some because his fame had gone and he had ceased to be amusing. As a matter of fact, his intention had never been to amuse. He was nevertheless deserted by the earnest few because the Kraus of that period threatened to destroy his "image in their soul," and that phase probably marks one of the most tragic endings in the history of letters. To attempt to explain it, and with it the second reason for Kraus's silence, it is necessary to consider his conception of language.[2]

Kraus saw in language the most immediate, and yet most concrete expression of mind or spirit. Having been primarily concerned throughout his life with the purest possible preservation of both by means of each other, he had been confident most of the time that, when led and taught, people would learn to accept and prefer the pure and to reject the ugly and the false. Hence he worked feverishly for almost forty years, carried by the truly rare intensity of his emotions, weeding out of newspapers as many falsities as the hours of his working nights would permit him, convinced that any little lie might plunge the world into disaster. He considered it his mission to clean out the Augean stables; it

[1] Cf. chap. VI.
[2] Cf. also chap. II.

was in the truest sense of the word a matter of conscience for him to brood over the position of a single comma in order to clarify a seemingly unimportant passage.

Buried in such intensive work, Kraus must, in spite of all his pessimism, have felt some vague hope of success; but when Hitler came to power Kraus knew that he had failed. He knew, moreover, that he had doubly failed when letters started to pour onto his desk and the newspapers finally started to mention him, asking: "Why are you silent now when you used to have so much to say about insignificant nothings?"

Kraus did not become insane like his beloved King Lear, but under the impact of analogous circumstances he certainly "went to pieces." It is only in this way that one can still speak of his work as a mirror of the times. At the end of a long period of silence after Hitler's rise to power, a few issues of *Die Fackel* appeared, one mourning the death of a friend, one criticizing a production of *King Lear*, and another consisting of press comments on his silence which he called, ironically, but appropriately, *Nachrufe auf Karl Kraus* (Obituaries about Karl Kraus). There was, however, not a word about Hitler.

Then came the three-hundred page *Fackel* of July, 1934; it was entitled: *Warum die Fackel nicht erscheint* (Why *Die Fackel* does not appear), and over the signature of the editorial office of *Die Fackel*, explained in a one hundred and seventy page letter to the "stupid reader, whoever he may be," why *Die Fackel* did not appear. In so far as they are at all intelligible, those pages may be summed up thus: "The misuse of spirit and of language have won the victory; what is there left for me to say?" Kraus repeated this over and over again, using thousands of words to clarify every aspect of his view. A few years earlier, when this tendency in Kraus was still much less pronounced, Theodor Lessing expressed the paradox involved in such writing very sharply: "... er hasst den Frevel des Worts und verbraucht Millionen Wörter, um den keuschen Segen des heiligen Worts zu preisen." [1] This *Fackel* still contained the same tendencies as previous ones but carried them to a frightening extreme. Kraus said "... man hat mutig zu sein und Sprachlehre zu treiben!" [2] He claimed that a linguistic seminar ought to be established in order to come closer to the depths of language, the unchaste use of which had led to the horrors of blood. Secondly, he

[1] ... he hates the sacrilege of the word and uses millions of words to praise the chaste bliss of the sacred word. Theodor Lessing, *Der jüdische Selbsthass* (Jewish Self-Hatred) (Berlin, 1930), p. 43.

[2] ... One must be brave and occupy oneself with grammar! *Die Fackel*, 890–905 (Ende Juli 1934), 168.

stated that Shakespeare and Offenbach ought to be read aloud. I cannot help thinking of Kraus as a priest, who, knowing all to be lost, still urges his parishioners to pray. In his despair Kraus admitted that what he had been maintaining about the power of the work throughout his life was wrong, since the *Wortschleim* (slime), Hitler's word, had not broken down when used as an instrument of untruth.[1] He spoke, in addition, of stupidity, which, much more than love or hunger, "makes the world go 'round.'" [2]

Even at this late date in his life one can still speak of a certain greatness of Kraus's language, but it is already becoming difficult to pick out entire sentences not too much weighed down by his despairing mind. Still, there were flashes of insight, images as well as comparisons, the strength of which could hardly be matched anywhere in his work:

... Ist denn, was hier dem Geist geschah, noch Sache des Geistes? [3]

... es ist ein Moment im Völkerleben, der insofern der Grösse nicht entbehrt, als bei elektrischem Licht, ja mit allen Behelfen der Radiotechnik an den Urzustand angeknüpft wird ...[4]

For, he went on to explain, it was certain that a doctrine could make the brain immune against all objections of nature or reason. It might be best to be silent and wait for nature to take revenge. Speaking of the weakness of the mind when confronted with Hitlerism, he called it "des Gedankens Blässe" [5] in its truest sense. It was powerless when confronted with human beasts incapable of believing and sympathizing where they had not experienced.[6] Kraus had complained for years that it was impossible to write satires because everyday reality itself exceeded yesterday's reality by more than satire could: "Es ist unmöglich, einem Bombenwerfer mit Pathos, einem Irren mit Witz zu begegnen." [7] What good would it do, Kraus complained again and again, to oppose a mad dog?... "Ich sang der Zeit das Grablied, eh' sie starb." [8] Nothing could destroy Nazism except itself. He showed pathetically that he, a Jew, was able to point at impurities in the language of the

[1] In the light of this it is interesting that commentators on Kraus continue to consider him their authority on the objective life of the word, disregarding Kraus's own ultimate doubts about the validity of his earlier views on language.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

[3] ... Why is that which happened to the spirit here still a matter of the spirit? *Ibid.*, p. 155.

[4] ... It is a moment in the life of nations which does not lack greatness in so far as there is a direct transition from the world of electric light, indeed of radio technology, to the primitive state of man ... *Ibid.*

[5] Paleness of thought.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

[7] It is impossible to treat a bomber with pathos, or to answer a maniac with wit.

[8] I sang a funeral song for the era before it died. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

Nazis. Unlike the refugee press, he did not daily accuse them of their crimes, but rather of using supposedly Jewish expressions from the world of business and said that language thus adjusted itself to a deep dishonesty.[1] He blamed the Nazis for not having created a single new linguistic form [2] and for using abbreviations excessively.[3] The climax of his decision "to contemplate the fall of German life from the viewpoint of linguistic theology" can no doubt be seen in his criticism of the bad logic, grammar, and syntax used by the Nazis, as illustrated by the example "Juda verrecke." [4] There should, Kraus insisted, be a comma after "Juda," in order to make it clear that a command and not a wish was expressed. He quoted Lanz von Liebenfels, an antisemite of a special type praising Kraus for "having given the 'Aryan' Germans the right to public polemics" [5]; soon after that he insisted satirically that he, Kraus, had translated Shakespeare's sonnets from the Hebrew.[6]

Kraus was in a dilemma. He knew that it was useless to fight against Hitler when all of Europe did not dare to do so; besides, to fight against Hitler would have meant making common cause with his lifelong enemies, the Jewish Liberal Press, and he still could not bring himself to do that. He believed that the Jewish journalists who were guilty of the maltreatment of words were ultimately responsible for the concentration camps. He had broken all ties with the Social Democratic press, his other possible ally; it is impossible to say to what extent he did so because he was personally on bad terms with its leading personalities. He knew that the brute physical violence of the Nazis would go over his head like a steam roller. In the Nazis' eyes and hence really for all practical purposes, he himself would be as much of a Jew as the most consciously Jewish of their victims. Undoubtedly he must have realized that his lifelong labors dedicated to the rationalization of his position between Jews and gentiles had been thwarted by the Nazi movement. Yet, as one might expect after a study of Kraus's career, there is no trace in his writings of such a realization of defeat on so personal a level. Instead, he expressed his amazement over the fact that the papers were still the same as before Hitler: The "omniscient press" still did not have the imagination to foresee what would happen, and still con-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 90f.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 88.
[3] Kraus objected to their use altogether. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
[4] A common form of name-calling: Perish, Judah! *Ibid.*, p. 110.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 103.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

tinued to print marriage advertisements, petty theatrical gossip, and detailed descriptions of accidents.

In Kraus's long letter to the reader, it is not always clear why he said everything just when he said it; there are attacks on the internal policy of the Social-Democratic Party and attacks on the Marxists in general, as well as a vague allusion to an obscure writer, Hermynia zur Mühlen, satirical remarks about those who told jokes against Hitler, and complaints about not being able to pay the postage on replies which he might otherwise give to inquisitive readers. Kraus, who had given the proceeds from his work to charity throughout his life, actually realized in the mid-thirties that he was sick and without funds. Most readers merely understood "Mir fällt zu Hitler nichts ein" (Nothing occurs to me about Hitler) [1] from the equally long second part of that *Fackel.* His desperate followers understood only that Kraus had finally condescended to make what they felt to be the first compromise of his life. He accepted Dollfuss as a *Lebensretter* (Lifesaver). [2] This step left him lonelier than ever. In time it almost exactly coincided with his first heart attack in the summer of 1934. From then on, Kraus was a sick man; he died in 1936, leaving on his desk the last *Fackel,* which dealt with Nazi Germany and was called *Die dritte Walpurgisnacht* (The Third Night of St. Walpurgis). Neither the editor of this work, Heinrich Fischer, who published it is 1952, nor any critic has been able to point out what this book of several hundred pages says. In view of Kraus's many years of minute labor to teach others to use language precisely, it is an irony that what his posthumous work, *Die dritte Walpurgisnacht,* conveys is not an intellectual understanding of what the Nazis had done until then, but an emotional one of their potential which was perhaps not yet quite imaginable to themselves. Many years earlier Kraus had already begun to predict the end of the world whenever he saw a snob walk by. Is it then too much to assume that the events of 1933 and of the following years broke him because they greatly overtaxed his physical and emotional strength? The following passage along with some already quoted in this chapter, again corroborates the view that he had turned almost exclusively to language, his favorite occupation:

... In einem Ozean Wellen formen, ja Tropfen verteilen; mit einer Wachsamkeit, die in den Schlaf reicht ... das Wechselspiel von Anstoss und Einfall

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 153.
[2] *Die Fackel,* 890–905 (Juli 1934), p. 263; Cf. Chap. VI, pp. 210ff.

dirigieren; soweit es ein Menschenhirn aushält der Schmach des Stoffes artistisch widerstehen ...[1]

Similarly, Kraus quoted a poem he had written fifteen years earlier: ...

> ...
> Wort und Wesen –
> die einzige Verbindung, die ich je
> in dieser nutzbeflissnen Welt erstrebt.
> . . . . . .
> im Erdensturz, dem Umbruch einer Zeile
> noch zugewandt, bis an den jüngsten Tag –
> erfüllend jene heilige Satzung, wo es auf
> das Komma ankommt, mag ich stammelnd dereinst
> nicht wissen, was das Thema war.[2]

He still acted as if he were convinced that the neglect of the smallest detail might be catastrophic, and that in an age when a human life seemed unimportant to many, even a comma mattered.

Kraus's works. Quantitatively the largest part of Kraus's work dealt directly with his place in the world, and most of the remainder did so indirectly. This tendency to center his attention on himself must be thought of as extending over the whole period of Kraus's literary activity in such a way that *Die Fackel* in its first year of publication presented itself to the reader merely as a generally cultural and political periodical with a strong personal and ethical note, but later became more and more of a subjective diary of Kraus. In it he constantly held the world to account for its attitude toward him. His themes often seemed to be opportunities for repeating that his writings were his own business, and yet he again and again belied his own words by attempting to justify himself, and by trying to influence his readers. In fact, his interest in having his "diary" read, so that he might influence his readers by it, was great enough to make him collect articles from *Die Fackel* and publish them as books according to general themes. There

[1] ... To form waves in an ocean, indeed to distribute drops; with a wakefulness which reaches into sleep ... to manage impulse and idea; to resist the disgrace of the subject matter as long as the human brain can stand it ... *Ibid.*, pp. 110f.

[2] Word and essence – the only connection for which I ever strove in this profit-minded world.

In the midst of the collapse of the world still concentrating on the reworking of a line, until Judgment Day – still fulfilling that sacred principle, where a comma may be decisive, I may one day stammer and not know what the subject matter was. *Ibid.*, p. 135. The poem is quoted here only in part.

were seven volumes of them, written for the most part in the first decades of the twentieth century and published under the following titles: *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität* (Morality and Criminality) 1908, *Die chinesische Mauer* (The Chinese Wall) 1910, *Weltgericht* (The Last Judgment), two volumes 1919, *Untergang der Welt durch die schwarze Magie* (The End of the World through Black Magic) 1922, *Literatur und Lüge* (Literature and Lie) 1929 and *Die Sprache* (Language) (posthumous) 1936.

Poems. Of the nine volumes of Kraus's *Worte in Versen*, the first four appeared during the First World War and the remaining ones mostly during the 1920's. Some of his poems were set on music by Ernst Křenek about 1930. Kraus was only rarely a poet. Much of his "poetry" was parody; "Volkshymne" modeled on "Gott erhalte," (the Austrian imperial anthem) is an example. Many more of Kraus's poems were political satires, denunciatory of the emperor,[1] of various disputing nationalities of the empire,[2] of self-styled Christians who mistreated illegitimate children,[3] and of contemporary poets and their work.[4]

If one of the criteria for poetry is permanent value, most of Volume VII of *Worte in Versen* (and many other individual poems) must be discounted, because it deals for the most part with details of contemporary politics. Many of Kraus's poems were of doubtful poetic value merely because of their highly moralistic tone: thus, for instance, *An den Bürger* (To the Citizen),[5] somewhat like Hofmannsthal's great poem *Manche freilich* (Some of course), was an appeal to middle-class people not to forget about those who toil in the mines and do similar hard, unpleasant work for them, very reminiscent of some poems found in old German elementary-school readers. Poems dealing with Kraus's working habits, language, and rhyme were rather frequent.

Even what might be called Kraus's lyric poetry proper is very uneven, in content and form rarely deviating from the pattern of the nineteenth-century *Epigonentum* (epigones). These poems deal with love, hatred, childhood memories, dream visions, waterfalls, winter, spring, death, the green at the roadside, the eyes of an old beggar woman, the loyalty of a dog, the death of a butterfly, or the mood expressed by his surroundings on a certain day. During the reading of these poems, one too often has the feeling that whatever Kraus genu-

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 25f.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 30.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 23f.
[5] We, I and the butterfly, / Only recently met in childhood. *Worte in Versen*, V, 21.

inely felt about these things is hidden by his too consciously-willed expression. He was no doubt aware of the effective contrast between the usual grouchy Kraus and his childlike, naive self when he wrote in *Legende:*

> Wir waren uns beide, ich und der Falter,[1]
> Erst neulich begegnet im Kindheitsalter

In *Schnellzug* (Express train) [2] he employed a technique which had appealed to generations of sentimental readers before him. Only when he freed himself from entirely conventional topics, as well as from his life-long annoyances, did Kraus's poetry come close to being truly lyrical. This is true in some verses dealing with his fear of death, *Todesfurcht* (Fear of Death) [3] being an example, and also to some extent in his poems of escape, such as *Jugend* (Youth) [4] and "Vallorbe":

> Du himmlisches Geflecht, du Glockenblumenkorb,
> Ursprung der Orbe, der Welt, du unversehrtes Ziel,
> Du Wonnewort Vallorbe, das in den Mai mir fiel,
> Du Tal der Täler, du, traumtiefes Tal der Orbe!
> . . . . . .
> Wie blau ist doch die Welt, vom Schöpfer aufgetan.[5]

There are also some individual poems from *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* in which his horror and bitterness over what was happening let him forget all about how poetry was conventionally written. *Der tote Wald* (The Dead Forest) [6] is an example. Because Kraus had a section of the following poem printed on the first page of his first volume of collected poems, he himself must also have thought highly of what may be the poet Kraus at his best, although in poems such as the following one might see Kraus again as an epigone – this time not of Goethe, but of Trakl whom he greatly admired:

[1] See note 5 page 12.
[2] *Ibid.*, V, 69.
[3] *Ibid.*, VI, 65.
[4] *Ibid.*, III, 77.
[5] You heavenly wickerwork, you basket of bluebells / Origin of the world, you intact goal / You word of joy Vallorbe which fell into my May / You valley of valleys, you, dream-deep valley of the world! .... How blue is the world, made manifest by the creator. *Ausgewählte Gedichte* (Zurich, 1939), p. 90.
[6] *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (Wien, 1919) p. 739.

. . .
du blasse Schwester des Monds,
süsse Verlobte des klagenden Windes,
schwebend unter fliehenden Sternen
. . . . . .
Siehe, so führt ein erstes Menschenpaar
wieder ein Gott auf die heilige Insel!
. . . . . .
. . . Zitternder Bote des Glücks,
kam durch den Winter der Welt der goldene Falter

Oh kniet, segnet, hört, wie die Erde schweigt.
Sie allein weiss um Opfer und Träne.[1]

It is hardly possible, nevertheless, to be deeply moved by Kraus's poetry. It leaves no images behind, and strong feelings are rarely transmitted by it. Kraus irritates his readers by obviously anticipating their judgments. Instead of seeing, as *he* did, his usual satire as the reverse of lyric poetry, one is likely to consider his lyric poetry merely the reverse side of his usual coin: one senses that the usually pessimistic and mistrustful Kraus only momentarily pretended to be full of the milk of human kindness.

Because, however, he always emphasized ethical value judgments, it is impossible to judge his poetry solely from the aesthetic point of view. With Kraus, nothing was entirely a matter of aesthetics; it was only a frequent, very welcome aid to the ultimate, ethical purpose.

Much of his verse is really on the level of jingles where the form of verse was chosen only for more effective expression. Often the point lies in the mere coincidence of similarity of sound, used in the service of ridicule of his fellow-writers, which was one of his perennial themes.

Wo ich Licht ersah erwächst mir solches Gelichter
Meine Flamme verbrennt mir dieser elende Schein [2]

In order to be fair to Kraus, however, we must realize that, in view of

[1] . . . thou pale sister of the moon, / sweet betrothed of the plaintive wind, / floating under fleeing stars / . . . see, thus a god leads a first pair of human beings to the holy island! / . . . Trembling messenger of happiness, / the golden butterfly survived the winter of the world / . . . Oh kneel down, bless and listen to the silent earth / It alone knows sacrifices and tears. *Ausgewählte Gedichte*, p. 59.

[2] Where I see light, such trash arises / This miserable pretense burns my flame. *Die Sprache*, ed. Dr. Ph. Berger (Wien-Leipzig, 1936) p. 25.

his own theory of the relation of satire and poetry, he *could* hardly be a poet. He definitely considered himself a satirist who could only exist in an age of decay, just as a poet could only exist in a more hopeful age. Thus while the poet re-created the positive, he, the satirist, had the more menial task of wiping out and burning out the negative.

Satire, this very tool of Kraus's passion for justice, was frequently transformed into a tool of injustice when he used it to apply strong moral stigma to people or works where he believed to see evidence of moral laxity, while they may basically merely have been counter to his taste.

Plays. Die letzten Tage der Menschheit is Kraus's first drama, and perhaps the greatest work that came out of World War I. Much of it had already appeared in *Die Fackel* during the war; it was published in its entirety in 1919. Since to Kraus a piece of literature was great in the degree to which it fulfilled a moral purpose, he valued *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* most highly of all his works: "... ein Schriftwerk, das so unmittelbar einem sittlichen Zweck unterstellt scheint, dass diesem durch die Hervorhebung literarischer Qualitäten fast Eintrag geschähe ..." [1] The play is unquestionably the most valuable one of Kraus's works, although it is no more of a drama in the conventional sense than his other plays. What gives it a great quality of genuineness is the fact that it is merely a condensation of several volumes of *Die Fackel*, centered thematically around the First World War. Kraus did not subject himself to an accepted medium, but merely chose his own; he wrote a chronicle of the war, dealing with deliberately-selected, repulsive phenomena from the outside world.

In a pageant of very broad scope, Kraus portrayed the horrors of the war, producing a play which it would take ten nights, hundreds of actors, and much of the European countryside to perform. There are scenes depicting the horrors of the battlefield simply and realistically, and others making these horrors more horrible still by contrasting them with scenes showing the insipidity of the higher-ups living in comfort; other scenes portray the officiousness of patriotic reports, the bestiality of officers who have seen too much war, the unscrupulousness of war profiteers, the pseudo-enthusiasm of social climbers engaged in welfare work, the perverted taste exhibited in war art, the Habsburgs' total

[1] "... A piece of writing which is so immediately subordinated to a moral purpose that stressing its literary qualities would almost be detrimental to the former ..." *Die Fackel*, 800–5 (Anfang Februar 1929), 2.

lack of comprehension of the situation, or the masses with their lack of concern about the war.

Kraus's other dramas followed during the twenties. The first, *Literatur, oder man wird doch da sehn* (Literature, or We'll See About That), his reply to Werfel's *Spiegelmensch* (Mirror-Man), was published in 1922. Kraus enthusiasts feel that play is Werfel's only claim to a shameful immortality because there words like *Kerzenstumpf* (Candle-Stub) refer to *Die Fackel* and its author. *Literatur, oder man wird doch da sehn* is the most permanent expression of Kraus's hatred for his own Jewish businessman's background. Werfel, whose background was so strikingly like Kraus's, is the central character. The play portrayed faithfully, with only slight caricature, a Central-European Jewish family just at the point of switching its occupation from commerce to literature. The proper local color and linguistic habits are supplied by the Jewish family, consisting of at least two generations of men and a few intellectual, and hence, to Kraus, repulsive women. The younger generation conducts the conversation in frequently Freudian language, speaking of their libidos and inhibitions. They make pretentious remarks about fashionable topics, thus usually revealing their basic lack of understanding. In a very casual tone they discuss the Manns, Rolland, Stefan Zweig, Neo-Catholicism, and Zionism, interpolating typical Jewish business phrases at the most inopportune places.

Two themes, however, continue throughout the play: first, Werfel's preoccupation with Goethe and with his own Goethean qualities, expressed in language spiced with quotations from Faust. The second theme is everybody's constant awareness of the existence of Kraus. Kraus seemed to care much more for occupying a prominent place in the public consciousness than about whether he was loved or hated. The place he occupied, as he has depicted it, was extremely important; everybody seemed to be aware of his existence. The climax of the play is a press representative's speech, designed to encourage the young men present to become journalists. This speech consists either of direct references to Kraus or of such paraphrases as: "Wer wüsste heute nicht, dass ein einziger Tag unserer Wirksamkeit das Geistesleben entscheidender beeinflusst hat als sämtliche Werke Goethes? ...[1]

In *Literatur, oder man wird doch da sehn,* one gains the impression that Kraus has divided all his people into three groups. The first con-

[1] "Who is not aware today that one single day of our activity has influenced intellectual life more decisively than all of Goethe's works together ..." *Literatur, oder, man wird doch da sehn* (Wien, 1921) p. 57.

sists of those who hate or at any rate very severely criticize him, speaking of his Jewish self-hatred and father-complex and saying that he has no character and has exhausted his talent long ago. Another group in the play considers Kraus foolish for merely making himself enemies and thinks he could have done much better if he had not insisted on going his own way. At this point, a voice interjects the rumor that Kraus, having earned enough money, will now retire to the stock exchange. The third kind of attitude is taken by Werfel himself; torn between love and hatred, he finally realizes how much he owes Kraus. Kraus believes to have revealed Werfel's basic insincerity when he has Werfel's father remind him of his conscious imitation of Goethe by complaining in Jewish jargon: "Zwei Seelen wohnen nebbich in seiner Brust." [1]

Traumtheater (Dream Theater) came out in 1922 and *Traumstück* (Dream Play) in 1924. These two little plays are brief lyric sketches containing some of the most important themes of Kraus's work. Presented in poetic language and form, they generalize on the poet's dream or semi-dream experiences in such a way as to increase the suggestion of the more than specific truth of what is being said. In *Traumtheater* Kraus sees a dream vision of the beloved in another man's arms. Characteristically she is an actress, for to him the actress is always the heightened woman. He feels what he has not permitted himself to feel when awake: the woman only gained by the new relationship, appearing even purer afterwards. In *Traumstück* he, the poet, taking a breathing spell after a section of his life's work, suspects that it has been in vain and will dissolve in nothingness. Half desperate, he falls asleep and sees first horrible creatures, symbolizing the war profiteers, psychoanalysts and other characters distasteful to him; then he sees a landscape and a butterfly. These, together with beautiful music and the voice of the eternally feminine, stir him again into going on with his work, for he knows that he has a mission which he must fulfill no matter how much he momentarily envies people satisfied just to vegetate. Clearly suggesting the close relation of artistic creation to dreams, both plays were also examples of the absurd theater more than a generation before the term even existed. They were produced by Berthold Viertel's *Truppe* in Vienna and in Berlin, in 1924.

In 1923 he had completed *Wolkenkuckucksheim* (Cloud Cuckoo

[1] Nebbich is the Jewish jargon word for (roughly) "poor fellow." Two souls live in his breast, *Ibid.*, p. 69.

Home), based on Aristophanes' *Birds*, and his last play *Die Unüberwindlichen* (The Unconquerable Ones) in 1927. Like most of Kraus's work his dramas were largely attacks on the foibles of mankind.

Epigrams and aphorisms. Epigramme came out in 1927. There were also three collections of aphorisms: *Sprüche und Widersprüche* (Sayings and Counter-sayings), 1909; *Pro domo et mundo*, 1912; and *Nachts* (At Night), 1919. All repeated the themes of his essays in more abstract language. These collections dealt largely with journalists and writers in general:

... So unbeachtet lebt kein Genie, wie ein Talent tot ist ...

... und bloss der soziale Zufall entscheidet, wer aus dieser gegen den Geist fortschreitenden Hunnenhorde der Bildung jeweils als Schreiber oder als Leser hervorgeht.[1]

When Kraus says "Wider besseres Wissen die Wahrheit zu sagen, sollte für ehrlos gelten," [2] the untrained reader may feel that this must be an apparent paradox.

After studying Kraus for many years however, one will come to realize that this is not a maxim, but a view which is sometimes applicable, although especially rare for Kraus who normally believed in telling the truth ruthlessly, and regardless of consequences.

The *Glossen* (Glosses), which had started out as answers to fictitious letters, originated in 1908, reached their final form in 1911, and as one of the most constant features of *Die Fackel*, continued throughout practically the whole life of the publication. These *Glossen* were quotations and pictures from the daily press which, with or without comments by Kraus, were extremely effective indictments, usually of contemporary writers and conditions. Kraus was very fond of this technique of expressing the most essential truths entirely in his enemies' own language, with no more aid than that afforded by some technical printing devices. The *Glossen* of a given issue might include: the story of a man ruined by a critic whom Kraus considered unscrupulous; a primitive poem by Heinisch about Rosegger; the picture of the Duke of Windsor looking through his legs which were pointed upward [3]; a brief newspaper report telling of the theft of a war veteran's false leg; a little lesson on the correct plural form of the word "Schilling"; and

[1] ... No genius lives so unobserved as a genius who is dead ... and mere social chance decides who, out of this horde of educational huns marching gainst the spirit proceeds as a writer, and who as a reader. *Pro domo et mundo* (Wien-Leipzig, 1912) p. 57.

[2] To tell the truth against one's better judgment should be considered dishonorable. *Nachts*. p. 213.

[3] *Die Fackel*, 686–90 (Mai 1925), 75.

finally a quotation by Georg Brandes that the world would be unthinkable without the press. He sometimes arranged the *Glossen* under such headings as *Mein Vaterland* (My Homeland) [1] which included a series of disgusting small scenes and news items concerning an antisemitic incident, tactless interference with someone's sex life, and the towels which were continually stolen from Austrian trains. Usually a simple quotation, or the juxtaposition of two, sufficed to show the reader a wrong attitude or deed, and to teach him how to "read" independently if he should come across an analogous case.

Polemics. Kraus wrote against Maximilian Harden when, in the first decade of the twentieth century, he had become convinced that Harden was a gossip with a style suited to impress the pseudo-intellectuals. In the middle 20's Kraus published attacks on Alfred Kerr, the critic, which filled *Fackel* issues ten times the size of the original periodical. These were intended to make the public conscious of Kerr's overpatriotic, even bloodthirsty attitude during the war. It is impossible to say by how much bitterness and personal jealousy Kraus was motivated in this fight when he had to see a man whom he considered a turncoat honored as an official messenger to France.

Passing over such minor feuds as the long-drawn-out ones against Hermann Bahr, Dr. Hans Liebstöckl, and others, I want to mention the dual battle which was the most sensational, and the one carried on with an even greater display of emotion than was otherwise characteristic of Kraus. It was Kraus's war fought against Johann Schober, the Viennese Chief of Police and later Chancellor of Austria, and, even more bitterly, against his protégé, the alleged Hungarian blackmailer, Imré Békessy, publisher of three Viennese newspapers. Directed against the latter was Kraus's famous *Békessiade*,[2] and connected with that were his attacks on Schober, to be found in part in the play, *Die Unüberwindlichen* (The Unconquerable ones). It depicts the collusion of moral cynicism in two spheres. Charlotte Sternbach-Gärter has pointed out the influence on Brecht (especially in *The Resistible Ascent of Arturo Ui*) of Kraus's use of actual persons and documents.

Kraus rightly prided himself on his courageous fights against specific persons, compared with other publicists who merely hinted or complained in general terms, but out of selfish interests did nothing to combat the perpetrators of those abuses, or in some cases even supported them.

[1] *Die Fackel*, 838–41 (September 1930), 134ff.
[2] Not one work, but a series of attacks in *Die Fackel*.

If there was very often no reply to Kraus's attacks, it did not necessarily mean that he was entirely right and his opponent wrong, or that the method of *totschweigen*,[1] often bewailed by Kraus, was used in order that the victory should make as little an impression as possible. Very often the victim was simply afraid of Kraus's sharp tongue and therefore preferred to drop the matter, rather than engage in further discussion.

[1] To kill by silence, i.e. by ignoring.

CHAPTER II

THE ABSOLUTE VALUE OF LANGUAGE

Language was central to Kraus. In order to understand Kraus, it is necessary to know his view of language; it involved his view of the world, of philosophy, and of poetry. Even his increasing preoccupation with grammar was not only the pedantic preoccupation of a recluse but also part of his effort to isolate the grain from the chaff and to find ideal, eternal form where there was a chance of its not having been corrupted by conscious purpose.

Contemporary view of language. Kraus's Viennese and European contemporaries, the logical positivists, considered the corruption of language to be an unchangeable fact. It was, they claimed, the result of definite historical factors which for the purpose of their own expression they circumvented by constructing abstractions and symbols, saying that the only pure language was that of mathematics. Meanwhile, the adherents of many *-isms* of literature which sprang up in the early twentieth century felt perfectly justified in indulging in what could at best be called emotional vagueness, implying an equal lack of any absolute standards in language. Here Kraus's view was radically different. While never becoming resigned to sloppiness and still less to conscious misuse of language, he was most earnestly bent on preserving it in all its richness.

Absolute value of language. To Kraus, language was an absolute value, but it was only in complete freedom that it was part of nature. Only in free movement could it express the *Weltseele* (World Soul) and become the measure and foundation of things. There were ideas corresponding to all words and words corresponding to all shades of meaning. Both existed in the universe even before they were used or identified with each other, but there was no thinking independent of language. Kraus was convinced that he was entirely infallible in pairing off words correctly, or better, "justly," since he believed that in the womb of

language processes took place beyond "correct" and "incorrect," albeit with infinitely many possibilities of ambiguity. There could never be too many of those for him as long as the author was conscious of them. A comma was a very important matter of conscience for Kraus; at times he spent hours trying to decide where to place one and even felt personally very guilty and responsible when, although he had read and reread a *Fackel* a dozen times, he found a minor misprint in the published version. On the other hand, he never hesitated in his use of words. They were to him something like living beings which paired themselves off with ideas almost of their own accord. The task of the speaker or writer was thus largely mechanical, provided he was a good listener. All of Kraus's writings were to a greater or lesser extent illustrations of this view. He usually started out with one word, or with one phrase, and then let it enter a large number of associations, really permitting language to be the guiding rod for his thinking. The following is the best-known passage of this kind:

In dieser grossen Zeit, die ich noch gekannt habe, wie sie so klein war; die wieder klein werden wird, wenn ihr dazu noch Zeit bleibt; and die wir, weil im Bereich organischen Wachstums derlei Verwandlung nicht möglich ist, lieber als eine dicke Zeit und wahrlich auch schwere Zeit ansprechen wollen; in dieser Zeit, in der eben das geschieht, was man sich nicht vorstellen konnte . . . und könnte man es, es geschähe nicht; in dieser ernsten Zeit, die sich zu Tode gelacht hat vor der Möglichkeit, dass sie ernst werden könnte; von ihrer Tragik überrascht, nach Zerstreuung langt, und sich selbst auf frischer Tat ertappend, nach Worten sucht . . .[1]

Even in this short excerpt it can be seen how Kraus let concepts develop out of each other in such a way that they gave each other color and shades of meaning. Thus an organically connected tissue developed which, continuing in complex variations on the original theme and alternating between balanced positive and negative elements, might be compared to a symphony and its movements.

Sometimes it seems that the alertness of words in pairing off with ideas depended on *their* mood. Kraus felt himself not to be the master, but the slave of words. He felt driven to organize them and thus to arrange as much of the world as possible in a meaningful way. To

[1] In this great time which I still knew when it was so little, which will become little again if it still has time for this; and which we shall rather refer to as a full time, and truly also a hard time, because in the realm of organic growth such a transformation is impossible; in this time when exactly that which could not be imagined is happening... and if it could be imagined, it wouldn't happen; in this time which has died laughing at the thought that it could become serious; which, surprised by its own tragedy, longs for dissipation, and, catching itself redhanded, searches for words... *Die Fackel*, 404 (Dezember 1914), 1 ff.

Kraus, "Die Sprache sei die Wünschelrute, die gedankliche Quellen findet." [1] Words had, as it were, the urge to search for their "real" counterparts, until thoughts grew into their predetermined form according to the laws of organic growth. To him words had their own thought and emotional value independent of people.

Content and form. Kraus often stressed the closeness of content and form in a good piece of writing:

> Nichts wäre törichter, als von Formtiftelei zu sprechen, wo Form nicht das Kleid des Gedankens ist, sondern sein Fleisch. Diese Jagd nach den letzten Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten führt ins Eingeweide der Sprache. Hier wird jenes Ineinander geschaffen, bei dem die Grenze von Was und Wie nicht mehr feststellbar ist, und worin oft vor dem Gedanken der Ausdruck war, bis er unter der Feile den Funken gab.[2]

The view of language as an organism becomes evident in Kraus's own choice of words: "Ansichten pflanzen sich durch Teilung, Gedanken durch Knospung fort." [3]

Importance of literal meanings. Kraus believed that the literal meaning of idioms was significant and therefore saw an indication of the writer's character in the phrase "auf eigene Faust" [4] found by him in a piece of writing originating with the Nazis. There are numerous passages in Kraus's writings expressing this view of idioms.

As I shall show later, Kraus made frequent comparisons between Shakespeare and Nestroy. He saw perhaps the greatest value of Shakespeare, and certainly of Nestroy, in that they reduced phrases to their original meaning. Of Nestroy he said: "Nestroy ist der erste deutsche Satiriker, in dem sich die Sprache Gedanken macht über die Dinge. Er erlöst die Sprache vom Starrkrampf und sie wirft ihm für jede Redensart einem Gedanken ab." [5] This was even more true of Kraus himself. Especially in *Sprüche und Widersprüche* (Sayings and Countersayings) he dealt frequently with his own relation to everyday language: "Das älteste Wort sei fremd in der Nähe, neugeboren und

[1] May language be the divining rod which finds springs of ideas. *Pro domo et mundo* (Wien, 1912) p. 82.

[2] Nothing would be more foolish than to speak of petty preoccupation with form where form is not the dress of thought but its flesh. This search for the ultimate possibilities of expression leads into the entrails of language. Here the kind of merger is brought about in which the dividing line between the what and the how can no longer be determined, and in which the expression often came before the thought, until, as it was being worked on with a file, it produced a spark. *Sprüche und Widersprüche* (Wien, 1909) p. 190f.

[3] Views propagate by division, thoughts by budding. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

[4] Literally: upon one's own fist.

[5] Nestroy is the first German satirist in whom language reflects about things. He loosens language from its cramp, and it rewards him with a thought in exchange for every phrase. "'Nestroy und die Nachwelt" (Nestroy and Posterity) *Die Fackel*, 349–50 (13. Mai 1912), 12.

mache Zweifel, ob es lebe. Dann lebt es. Man hört das Herz der Sprache klopfen." [1]

"*Unmaskings.*" Kraus's *Entlarvungen* (unmaskings) were wittiest when they concerned the Viennese Jewish environment which had a language somewhat different from that of the rest of the Viennese. Of this language he said: "... Und so ist er (dieser Dialekt) auch die Wünschelrute in der Hand des satirischen Suchers, die ihm alle verborgenen Schlechtigkeiten der irdischen Seele auffinden hilft." [2] He often employed direct quotations and only rarely a short comment for additional effect. He used this type when he said "... Frau Sorma besticht nicht ... sie hatte nichts Bestechendes." [3] Here Kraus obviously saw a clear connection between the negative criticism and the fact that Mrs. Sorma, an actress, had not bribed the critics. To him such a phrase could only arise among people who bribed habitually and thus betrayed themselves by their terminology. Another time, he threw an entirely new light, for instance, on a newspaper article about Alice Schalek, the "brave woman war-reporter." The fatal heading here was "Die wackere Schalek forcht sich nit." [4] She was "unmasked" by the proximity of the words "wackere" and "forcht sich nit" on the one hand and on the other "die ... Schalek" - the juxtaposition of images of a healthy rustic Swabian and of a Jewish woman journalist, a personage *a priori* ridiculous in Kraus's circles. He felt that language itself betrayed the faults of its speakers in such phrases as "Wir stehen im Zeichen des Fortschritts." (We stand in the sign of progress).

Kraus continually defended the play on words as the epitome of pure, clean, naïve humor, the type he erroneously believed to be the unspoiled humor of the German Romanticists.[5] Kraus's witticisms were chiefly puns. When Kraus played like a juggler with the similarity of words and with the sound of words which had nothing to do with each other, he considered himself the successor of the Romanticists, of Tieck, Jean Paul, and, of course, of Nestroy. The merit which made a sentence worthy of inclusion in a volume of Kraus's aphorisms was often the

[1] Let the oldest word be strange when viewed closely, newly born, and make one doubt if it is alive. Then it becomes live. One hears the heartbeat of language. *Sprüche und Widersprüche*, p. 193.

[2] And thus it (this dialect) is also the divining rod in the hand of the satiric seeker which helps him find all the hidden wickedness in the human soul on earth. *Untergang der Welt durch die schwarze Magie* (The End of the World through Black Magic) (Wien, 1922), p. 151.

[3] The writer here means: Mrs. Sorma does not charm ... there is nothing charming about her. But "bestechen" could also be understood in its closer-to-literal sense: to bribe, i.e. the critics. *Die Fackel*, 64 (Anfang Jänner 1901), 29. A quotation from the *Neue Freie Presse*.

[4] Brave Schalek is not afraid.

[5] Cf. Bernhardi, *Sprachlehre der Romantik* (Romantic Theory of Language) (Berlin, 1940), II, 396.

ambiguity of the word, such as that of "Satz" in the following: "Ein Aphorismus braucht nicht wahr zu sein, aber er soll die Wahrheit überflügeln. Er muss gleichsam mit einem Satz über sie hinauskommen." [1] He had a high esteem for puns. Examples are, "Das Volk der Richter und Henker – für "Dichter und Denker" (The People of judges and hangmen – for poets and thinkers), and reflections like those on the name "Ernest Posse." [2] The latter seems to be analogous to the numerous jokes made about the name Kraus; those, naturally, he considered very low.

Relationship to Language. Kraus's relationship to language was a very personal one. It was to him a matter of conscience and love, and only the word "erotic" can adequately express it. The poems *Der Reim* (Rhyme),[3] *Abenteuer der Arbeit* (Adventure of Work),[4] *Elegie auf den Tod eines Lautes* (Elegy on the Death of a Sound) [5] (dealing with the "h" following "t," as for instance in "theuer," which was dropped officially at that time), as well as many epigrams were nothing but love songs and memorials to language. Moreover his loving and careful use of language went so far that he considered abbreviations of words or changes of spelling actually sins against the spirit. His attitude might, in this relationship, be described as feminine-passive:

> Ich beherrsche die Sprache nicht; aber die Sprache beherrscht mich vollkommen. Sie ist mir nicht die Dienerin meiner Gedanken. Ich lebe in einer Verbindung mit ihr, aus der ich Gedanken empfange, und sie kann mit mir machen, was sie will. Ich pariere ihr aufs Wort. Denn aus dem Wort springt mir der junge Gedanke entgegen und formt rückwirkend die Sprache, die ihn schuf. Solche Gnade der Gedankenträchtigkeit zwingt auf die Knie und macht allen Aufwand zitternder Sorgfältigkeit zur Pflicht. Die Sprache ist eine Herrin der Gedanken, und wer das Verhältnis umzukehren vermag, dem macht sie sich im Hause nützlich, aber sie sperrt ihm den Schoss.[6]

Kraus saw language as something very much alive:

[1] An aphorism doesn't need to be true, but it should go beyond truth. It should, as it were, go beyond it with one "Satz" – which here is to be understood in two meanings: sentence and jump. *Sprüche und Widersprüche*, p. 167.

[2] *Die Fackel*, 595–600 (Juli 1922), 11. Referring to the contrast between the first name which means "earnest" and the last name which means "farce."

[3] *Worte in Versen*, II, 31.

[4] *Ibid.*, II, 8.

[5] *Ibid.*, II, 41.

[6] I am not a master of language but language rules me completely. It (she in German) is not the servant of my thoughts. I live in a relationship with it out of which I conceive thoughts, and it can do with me as it pleases. I obey its every word. For the infant thought springs from the word for me, and retroactively forms the language which created it. Such a blessing of pregnancy with thought forces one on one's knees and makes the expenditure of great, trembling care a duty. Language is the mistress of thought, and if anyone reverses the relationship, language will serve in his house but will close its womb to him. *Sprüche und Widersprüche*, p. 192f.

Ein Satz kann nie zur Ruhe kommen. Nun sitzt dieses Wort, denke ich, und wird sich nicht mehr rühren. Da hebt das nächste seinen Kopf und lacht mich an. Ein drittes stösst ein viertes. Die ganze Bank schabt mir Rübchen. Ich laufe hinaus; wenn ich wiederkomme, is alles wieder ruhig; und wenn ich wieder unter sie trete, geht der Lärm los.[1]

The image which he had in mind here was, of course, that of a classroom where every word was a lovable though mischievous little boy. Thus he was also able to say in his poem to his old teacher:

Du guter Lehrer hattest den Schüler gern
Doch näher deinem reinen Herzen
Lag wohl das Wohl eines armen Wortes.[2]

Language was to him the last refuge in an insecure world:

In sprachzerfallnen Zeiten
im sicheren Satzbau wohnen:
dies letzte Glück bestreiten
noch Interpunktionen.[3]

Mysticism. Berthold Viertel showed that Kraus's mystic-religious feelings toward language were similar to those of the Eastern-Jewish mystics, the *Chassidim.*

This feeling toward language expressed itself in Kraus's passage concerning Heine:

Das Geheimnis des alten Wortes war ihm fremd. Die Sprache war ihm zu Willen. Doch nie brachte sie ihn zu schweigender Ekstase. Nie zwang ihn ihre Gnade auf die Knie ... O markverzehrende Wonne der Spracherlebnisse! [4]

Kraus's *Sprachmystik* (mysticism with regard to language) went so far that it can be compared with the relation to language of the animistic primitives who believe in the magic of language and hope to affect the outside world by mentioning a name. Very much like them, Kraus felt that the word stood in the place of things.[5]

[1] A sentence can never come to rest. At times I think this word sits, and won't budge. But then the next one raises its head and laughs at me. A third nudges a fourth. The whole row makes fun of me. I run outside; when I come back, all is quiet again; and when I step among them, the noise starts all over again. *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 164.

[2] You good, old teacher were fond of the pupil / But closer to your pure heart / Was probably the welfare of a poor word. *Worte in Versen*, II, 15.

[3] To live in secure sentence structure / In linguistically decadent times / This last happiness / Is still supplied by punctuation marks. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[4] The secret of the old word was strange to him. Language obeyed him. But it never brought him to silent ecstasy. Its grace never forced him down on his knees ... Oh marrow-consuming joy of linguistic experiences! *Die Fackel*, 329–30 (31. August 1911), 33.

[5] Leopold Liegler, *Karl Kraus und die Sprache* (Wien, 1918), pp. 6f.

Reverence. Kraus treated creatively-formed language with particular reverence and protested violently against anyone who dared to change even one word in a great literary work. Considering Schlegel's translation of Shakespeare, one of the greatest creative works in world literature, Kraus attacked Gundolf strongly for his translation of *Macbeth:* "Revisoren über Shakespeare-Schlegel! Die Flügel, die ein Wort bekommen hat, ihm brechen, das vermag nur ein philologisches Gewissen." [1] Only a philological conscience would set itself up as a revisor of Shakespeare-Schlegel, and break the wings of a word. (Inconsistently, Kraus translated some of Shakespeare's plays, as well as his sonnets, himself).

The idea of the development of language in the course of history had no real meaning to Kraus. He was convinced that when a writer allowed himself to be used by language as an instrument, there would not be any contradictions in it which would violate its spirit. In that way the tradition of associations which linked all of the generations of one people along the guiding thread of language would not be disrupted. Apart from a few isolated instances, Kraus objected very much to the literary movements which continued to spring up throughout his lifetime and was proud to be one of the despised *Epigonen.* It is difficult to explain how he, the great admirer of Goethe, who coined many new words, could say the following: "Nur eine Sprache, die den Krebs hat, neigt zu Neubildungen ... Ungewöhnliche Worte zu gebrauchen, ist eine literarische Unart. Man darf dem Publikum bloss gedankliche Schwierigkeiten in den Weg legen." [2]

Languages. Kraus has been called "ein Sprachbesessener" (one possessed by language), but his love was restricted to unbounded love for the German language. In fact, he knew no other language well. Among his many statements about other languages, I have only been able to find the following relatively positive one: "Die französische Sprache hat, wie die russische, die Eigentümlichkeit, höflicher zu sein als die deutsche." [3]

In the case of two other languages, Yiddish [4] and Hungarian, about

[1] *Sprüche und Widersprüche,* p. 183. Revisors of Shakespeare-Schlegel! To break the wings which a word has acquired, only a philological conscience is capable of that.

[2] Only a language which has cancer is likely to create new words.... To use unusual words is bad literary manners. One mustn't place any difficulties in the way of the public other than ideological ones. *Sprüche und Widersprüche,* p. 175.

[3] The French language, as is also the Russian, is distinguished from the German by being more polite. *Die Fackel,* 66 (Ende Januar 1901), 1.

[4] cf.p. 33.

which he expressed himself clearly, he spoke with a hatred as great as his love of the German language. He said concerning Hungarian:

> ...habe ich nie gewünscht, sie (meine Werke) in ein Idiom verschleppt zu sehen, das mir heute nach keinem Menschenton klingt und wie eh und je die Verständigung über Pferdewetten und Mehlabschlüsse zu erleichtern scheint.[1]

Kraus loved the German language so much because it seemed to him particularly rich in emotional overtones and associations. Like a *Lied* (Song), it was lyrical, musical and sensitive. A German word could never be described by abstractions, that is, it could not be defined. Kraus's own definitions were definitions only in form; they were actually intended to satirize definitions and their subjects. One definition, allegedly by Kraus, has become a saying: "Journalismus ist die Privatisierung des Öffentlichen." [2] When asked to explain any of his difficult passages, Kraus replied, if at all, by a still more difficult passage, implying that to him the inability to understand meant lack of sensitivity and also of good will.

Whereas the Germans had, at their best, reached unmatched heights of culture, no other nation was so unaffected by the peaks of its cultural development. Kraus was shocked to notice the sloppy *Umgangssprache* [3] of the supposedly educated Germans, those aware of the great works of the German language. It seemed clear that this state of affairs had come about by the desire for the outward pretense of culture:

> Nur eine Sprache, die so der Seele und dem Betrieb, zugleich der tiefsten und der niedrigsten Gesittung gerecht wird, hat die Totenklage über Euphorion und ein "Heldengedächtnisrennen" ermöglicht, ...[4]

He saw with deep regrets how the language, which could express untold heights, could also become the instrument of cultural decadence, and once said about a spineless journalist "dass nur der anders kann, der gar nichts kann." [5] This ability to "operate" at various levels reduced for him all of the man's products to the lowest of those levels. The same was true of the German language: within the contemporary cultural framework the plausibility of the deepest works of language was limited by the lowest.

...[1] I have never desired to see them (my works) dragged into a language which sounds like no human language to me and seems to facilitate communication about bets on horses, and contracts in the flour business. *Ibid.*, 514–18 (August 1919), 55.

[2] Journalism is the transformation of public matters into private ones.

[3] Everyday, semi-colloquial language.

[4] Only a language which does justice in this way to the soul and to practical matters, to the deepest and to the lowest morality at the same time, has made possible the lamentation over the dead Euphorion and a race-in-memory-of-dead-heroes...

[5] That only he who knows nothing, can do otherwise. *Untergang*, p. 101f.

Opposition to change. He acted as if he did not realize the understandable difficulty of his readers, brought about by the fact that the German-speaking world was no longer a cultural unit. He thought of language – at its best – as of something fixed, not subject to definite variations, thus preserving the myth of the unity of the cultural and intellectual elite. Kraus did not see the existence of an infinitely varied pattern of semantic units, but rather clung stubbornly to his belief in the sole "rightness" of German culture and language before Heine, and to his own projection of them into the present.

Heine and the German language.[1] It was Heine who, in Kraus's opinion, set the ball rolling in the direction of writing in a way calculated for effect, with crocodile tears rather than with his heart's blood. Heine made the German language facile and "brilliant." He used formulae, fixed clichés within the language, chatted, and, according to Kraus, invented the art of saying nothing about everything, implying while making a statement that the opposite might be true just as well. For Heine words took the place of ideas; one could discuss them, build systems on them, and believe in them. While *Geist* (spirit or mind) or *Gedanke* (thought) ruled German letters before Heine, it was he who introduced *Meinung* (opinion).[2]

Kraus viewed all of Heine's successors in the way he had viewed Heine and considered modern journalism and *Literatentum*[3] the spiritual descendants of Heine. Thus Kraus ascribed to Heine a greater significance than any of his most enthusiastic followers but it was a negative significance. It is characteristic of Kraus's way of seeing history that he did not think of Heine as of a link in an organic development, but rather as of an evil accident or freak of nature.

He disliked Heine throughout his life, but in *Heine und die Folgen* (Heine and the Consequences) (1910) he expressed his resentment in detail. He claimed that Heine had superimposed French form on German content:

Von einer Kultur gestimmt, die im Lebensstoff schon alle Kunst erlebt, spielt er einer Kultur auf, die von der Kunst nur den stofflichen Reiz empfängt. Seine Dichtung wirkt aus dem romantischen Lebensgefühl in die deutsche Kunstanschauung. Und aus dieser Bindung bietet sie das *utile dulci*, ornamentiert sie den deutschen Zweck mit dem französichen Geist.[4]

[1] Cf. *Heine und die Folgen.*

[2] Kraus spoke of his own utterances as "*Geist*" or "*Gedanken*," of those of most of his contemporaries as "Meinung," implying that *Meinung* is something inferior.

[3] doings of the literati.

[4] Formed by a culture which experiences all art in the very subject matter of life, he performs for a culture which accepts only the subject matter of art as a stimulus. The effect

Form and content existed side by side with Heine, but were not integrated with each other, thus being neither in conflict nor in unity. Kraus ascribed to Heine's influence that literary standards had become indefinite and tradition had been disregarded. Kraus, the most personal writer imaginable, objected to the originator of *Stimmungsberichte* [1] when they took the place of factual reporting. The gap between life and art was bridged over by the informal *feuilleton*, a typically French form. Once more Kraus probably won many of his readers over to his own point of view more by the way in which he expressed himself than by what he said:

> Heine aber hat den Deutschen die Botschaft dieses Himmels gebracht, nach dem es ihr Gemüt mit einer Sehnsucht zieht, die sich irgendwo reimen muss und die in unterirdischen Gängen direkt vom Kontor zur blauen Grotte führt ... von der Gansleber zur blauen Blume.[2]

In this practice of adorning life by decorating it with art Kraus saw a *mélange des genres* which was a desecration of art. This way of making "*Einbruchswerkzeuge*" [3] into ornaments was worse than the Victorian craze for decorations.[4] Kraus traced back to Heine the impressionistic trend of modern journalism which brought about the true *Franzosenkrankheit* (French disease): "... wie lockert sich die Moral des deutschen Sprachgefühls!" [5] Contrary to the German language, French had *esprit* in its face but no beauty in its brain. Like a woman, it gave pleasure and thought along with it, but whereas to Kraus the lack of inhibitions was a virtue in a woman, it was disturbing in a language. Admitting that spirit and grace were necessary to invent the *feuilleton*, Kraus believed that it was continued automatically by others, and had already been so, even from Heine's pen. Thus beauty and spirit were mechanized and cheapened by large-scale distribution and became the attractive shells of bad intentions.

Because of Heine, anybody who wished to handle the German language might do so. The most uncanny aspect of the situation was to Kraus the uniformity of all feuilletonistic talents. There was always

of his poetry comes from the romantic attitude toward life to the German view of art. And out of this union it offers the *utile dulci*, i.e. it ornaments German purpose with French spirit.

[1] Reports in which the mood produced is most important.

[2] Heine however has brought the Germans the message of this heaven for which their emotional make-up strives with a longing which must find its rhyme somewhere, and which leads through subterranean passages directly from the office to the blue grotto ... from the goose liver to the blue flower. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[3] Burglar's tools, *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[4] Here it is difficult to say whether this preoccupation originated with Kraus or with his close friend, the architect and interior decorator Adolf Loos.

[5] How loose is the morality of the German feeling for language becoming!

a personal note, and the same things were said in the same tone in all comparable situations: anything would do and was said with an air of importance. Those tendencies increased under the leadership of such men as Hermann Bahr in Austria, whereas the French, in whom they were native and therefore, according to Kraus, more justified, took a fortunate turn toward a genuinely psychological emphasis.

Real artists like Ludwig Speidel were rare among feuilletonists; generally feuilletonists chose big topics like eternity which became out of date almost before the ink was dry. The true artist, on the other hand, chose the day, even the minute; but his work grew more freely and became younger the further it was from the original occasion for the writing. According to Kraus, what lived by its subject matter died with it, whereas what lived by language continued to live. Kraus contrasted the *feuilletons*, which were easy to read when they were first published but had soon become too old to read, with *Die Fackel*, protected against the garish light of day by veils most of which would later lift.

Heine was, to be sure, in a sense the founder of modern journalism, and his prediction that his articles "Für die Bildung des Stils für populäre Themata sehr förderlich sein würden" [1] came true. But some day, Kraus believed, Heine's work would have faded and it would be necessary to admit that his imitators excelled him by far, perhaps not with regard to the scope of intellectual interests but certainly to the rhyming technique and wit which actually founded Heine's fame.

The careful writers who preceded Heine were hard to understand but had something to say, whereas with Heine it was quite the opposite. To him, a word was a matter of intention or of coincidence but not of necessity: "Heine hat aus dem Wunder der sprachlichen Schöpfung Zauber gemacht." [2] As will be seen later, Kraus never became at all reconciled to seeing language used professionally:

> Worte sind oft wichtiger als Dinge, und was weiss ein Mann, den schon die Lebensfremdheit von den Dingen trennt und der sich berufsmässig mit Literatur zu befassen hat, von der Bedeutung der Worte! [3]

Criticism of the language of others. There were few individuals of whom Kraus felt that they knew German and were worthy of speaking it. Germans from the Reich, with their showy, irreverent, shop assistant's way of using fashionable words certainly were not worthy. Kraus said

[1] Would greatly aid the development of a style suited to popular themes. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[2] Heine has made magic out of the miracle of linguistic creation. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[3] Words are often more important than things, and what does a man, who is separated from things by his other-wordliness, and who occupies himself with literature for professional reasons know about the meanings of words? *Literatur und Lüge*, p. 340.

frequently that the closer one got to the German language, the further one got from the Germans. There was, asserted Kraus, no longer any respect for orthography and pronunciation, and the craze for abbreviating words was overstepping all bounds. Foreign words were pronounced incorrectly or replaced with equal lack of correctness by nationalistic purists. Kraus objected especially strongly to the latter because he felt that the new German words were empty monstrosities, lacking the infinitely varied connotations accumulated throughout German history by the older, though non-Germanic, words. The German people had become dupes of depraved words, namely of propaganda, the rule of the Nazis in Germany being, in a sense, the fulfilment of Kraus's prophesies concerning language. Having thus been deprived of thought, the Germans had, according to him, fallen below the level of animals who could at least express themselves adequately through sounds and the wagging of tails.

Austrian German. Kraus maintained that Austrian German was even worse than that of the Germans proper. In the case of the Austrians he objected above all to their cultivation of a leisurely dialect, to vague words and phrases such as *Ramasuri,*[1] *sich durchwursteln,*[2] and *mir san ja eh die reinsten Lamperln* [3] and in general to the Austrians' willingness to be "cute" and quaint in their language in order to attract tourist traffic. He called *tachinieren* the worst linguistic scar of the war.[4]

Cliché phrases. Public utterances had, according to Kraus, become almost completely platitude-ridden, and language had hardened into prescribed channels of thinking. As a result, people were no longer aware of the stupidity involved in listening attentively to a speech filled with the usual ostentatious phrases concerning such unimportant topics as the *fiakers'* [5] duty of having mileage meters installed. Kraus claimed he awakened people's attention by satires teaching them how to listen and how to read. He pointed out how through constant use figures of speech had lost color and meaning, and how impoverished the German language had become. Again and again he chastized the Viennese "educated" public for their constant affected use of "*Obolus*" for "*Sperrgeld*" (admission fee), "*Cerberus*" for "*Hausmeister*" (janitor),

[1] Means approximately "noise and disorder."
[2] To muddle through.
[3] Literally: "We are innocent little lambs," a phrase in which Kraus saw the expression of the Austrians' shaking off of all responsibility, especially for the war.
[4] To manage to evade military service.
[5] Horse-drawn carriages for hire.

"*Finanzminister*" for "*Zahlkellner*" (cashier-waiter), "*Kaffeeis*" (coffee-icecream) for "*Strassenschmutz*" (mud), "*Göttergatte*" (divine husband) for simply "*Gatte*" (husband), and so on.[1] Entire phrases clearly showed the artificiality of sentiments; thus in certain circles no one any longer said "*tanzen*" (to dance), but, just as a matter of course, "*dem Tanz huldigen*" (to do homage to the dance).

Language of the Jews. Kraus criticized the language of the Viennese Jews most bitterly of all. Actually, except for part of the un-assimilated group in the Leopoldstadt which spoke Yiddish, the Viennese Jews spoke German, ranging from the best spoken in Vienna and perhaps anywhere, through German mixed with typically Yiddish expressions, down to German barely distinguishable from Yiddish. Each of these stages had a sentence rhythm, melody, and accompanying gesticulation of its own, parallel to the vocabulary. During Kraus's lifetime, however, the vast majority of Viennese Jews who were relatively well-educated spoke a German which was hardly distinguishable from that of the Viennese Gentiles.

It can be said without exaggeration that to Kraus nothing was more repulsive than the least trace of Jewish linguistic usage in a German sentence even if the sentence were grammatically and syntactically correct. Along with others, Kraus called that manner of speaking "*mauscheln*" or, when in a good humor, merely "*jüdeln*"; [2] he thought he found it even in Felix Salten's *Bambi* and wrote about it one of his most amusing satires: *Jüdelnde Hasen.*[3] In fact, in the play *Literatur, oder man wird doch da sehn* he ascribed the habit of "*jüdeln*" to the whole Viennese-Jewish literary clique, and in particular to Franz Werfel.

During the war his ire knew no bounds when the jargon of Galician-Jewish merchants came to be heard more and more often in the streets of Vienna. He saw in that language the greedy, money-minded character of its speakers. In his article *Wehr und Wucher* [4] he reproduced a court scene in which Eastern-Jewish businessmen were accused of having made unfair profits. Kraus was even angry at their names and was convinced that people who violated the German language as those men did were bound to be guilty:

[1] *Die Fackel*, 588–94 (März 1922), 31ff.

[2] "*Mauscheln*" or "*jüdeln*" are derogatory terms used to describe the manner of speech characteristic of some Jews.

[3] *Ibid.*, 820–26 (Ende Oktober 1929), 45ff. perhaps, Rabbits with Jewish accents.

[4] *Die Fackel*, 457–61 (10. Mai 1917), 1ff. Defense and usury.

Diese Kreise schlagen vor, dass etwas bestehen müsse; äussern den Wunsch, wie wichtig es wäre; verlangen, sie können die Sache nur durchführen, wenn sie bekommen, bitten, sie möchten haben. Die Geschäfte, die sie abgeschlossen haben, darüber reden sie nicht. Aber die Sprache, die sie abschliessen, bleibt wohl der unvergängliche Dreckhaufen, den sich diese Gegenwart gesetzt hat. In Berlin wird wenigstens fliessend gemauschelt. Nicht einmal das funktioniert hier.[1]

Nothing was clear, Kraus continued, except the profits.

Ist das nicht das Ende des Seins? ... dass mit solchem Rotwelsch die elende Beziehung zwischen Geld und Ware zu einem Mysterium des Rebbachs [2] herumgedreht wird. Das gibt es ... Kein Mensch weiss, was dahintersteckt, jeder weiss, dass es die Technik des Nehmens betrifft. Das Grauen erfasst einen vor dieser Kabbala [3] des Saldo, durch die die Welt zwar zu Schaden kommt, aber nie zu dem Wissen, wie gross er sei.[4]

Kraus's own language. Kraus's language was a mirror of himself even more than was his view of language. He had many styles suited to his many themes and media, his satires, polemics, relatively objective articles, short comments, letters, poems, epigrams, plays, and speeches. These styles, moreover, continued to change and develop throughout his lifetime. Poetic, obscene, scientific, and commonplace language often existed side by side. He changed effortlessly from classical German to any one of many dialects and to the trite, pompous language of those whom he satirized. He was bold in his use of language, and could sound very much like Luther, Rabelais, or the Gospel of St. John. Some of his sentences had the power of proverbs: *Je grösser der Stiefel, desto grösser der Absatz.*[5] When one reads Kraus, one senses with what pains he arranged his sentences. Constant effort was necessary to bring about the tension of his satires, to vary his vocabulary, to avoid ambiguity in his use of possessive and personal pronouns, to observe the correct

[1] (It may not always be possible to translate the intentionally bad German of this paragraph into equally bad English:) These circles propose, that something would have to exist; express the desire, how important it would be; demand that they would only be able to carry the matter through, if they receive; ask, they would like to have. The business deals they have concluded, about that (sic) they do not speak. But the language which they conclude (i.e. finish), certainly remains the most imperishable rubbish heap which this present age has set up for itself. In Berlin they at least speak fluently with a Jewish accent. Not even that works properly here. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[2] Yiddish for "profits."

[3] Jewish mystical writings.

[4] Is this not the end of existence?... that with such gibberish the miserable relationship between money and goods is twisted into a mystery of profits. That exists ... Nobody knows what is behind it, everyone knows it concerns the technique of taking. One is gripped by horror of this mystery of the balance of accounts through which harm comes to the world, but never the knowledge how great that harm is. *Die Fackel*, 457–61 (10. Mai 1917), 10f.

[5] Literally: the larger the boot, the larger is the heel; actually: the greater the nonsense, the greater the sales. *Sprüche und Widersprüche*, p. 225.

sequence of tenses, and to use a subjunctive where it ought to be placed, according to grammatical rules and sometimes in spite of usage.

Sometimes Kraus's sparkling wit and the strength of his words spoken in anger gave the impression that his language put on a show for its own sake. It reminds one of the Austrian nobles' baroque wrought-iron park gates, with their organically intertwined, branch-like ornaments. Probably no one besides Kraus himself followed his numerous maxims with regard to writing. The following excerpts only hint at two extremes:

Der Schriftsteller muss alle Gedankengänge kennen, die sein Wort eröffnen könnte ... Je mehr Beziehungen dieses eingeht, um so grösser die Kunst; aber ... es darf nicht Beziehungen eingehen, die dem Künstler verborgen bleiben ....[1]

and:

Gelingt es dem Autor, einander entlegene Zeiterscheinungen, Gegenständliches und Hintergründliches, in einem Zuge so zusammenzufassen, dass der Gedanke ein abgekürzter Essay ist, dient der Sprachwitz selbst pathetischer Empfindung als Kompositionselement, so ist keine Aussicht auf Volkstümlichkeit gegeben.[2]

Chronologically, his language can be roughly divided into his early, middle and late periods and into what I shall call his period of disintegration. The scope of this book makes it necessary to leave wide gaps between the examples illustrating Kraus's style.

In the early period, his style was very much like that of his contemporaries, including those who wrote contributions for *Die Fackel;* only his witty remarks were already clearly his own. His own style, however, begins to emerge already. There was something cold about Kraus's writings; even where there was a strong fire burning in him, it was somehow cold, distant, and in that sense almost frightening.

Strangely enough, this was particularly true in his early period, although the highlights of his style of that period were the humorous effects which he produced by means of language. They were plentiful and even now, when the original occasions which brought them about have become meaningless, they are still extremely funny:

[1] The writer must know all trains of thought which his word could open up ... the more relationships it enters into, the greater is the art; but it must not enter into relationships which remain hidden from the artist... *Ibid.*, p. 174.

[2] If the author succeeds in compressing in one breath phenomena of the time which are remote from each other, matters of substance and intangible ones, so that the thought becomes an abbreviated essay, if the esprit even of language expressing pathos serves as an element of composition, then there is no chance that the piece of writing will be popular. *Ibid.*, p. 164.

Aber ein Hirn, in dem eine Altarkerze brennt, ist immer noch heller als eines, in dessen Paragraphenwindungen sich die Strahlen des Lebens brechen ...[1]

Referring to the current morality trials, Kraus said:

Oder es ist, als ob einem der Finger, der den Schleier des Privatlebens gelüpft hat, in den Hals gesteckt würde. Oder gleich der ganze Arm der Gerechtigkeit.[2]

In analyzing his witty remarks, one finds that there is an extreme, almost violent quality about them, a strength of antitheses and a picturesqueness which make his puns hard to forget.

Jokes about weaknesses. If I say that Kraus was often unfair to those whom he satirized, I do not mean that a satirist must not exaggerate or caricature; such methods are essential to satire. Nevertheless, it was beneath the dignity of a satirist whom he believed to have an ethical mission, to joke about the names or the physical features of his adversaries. Thus it cheapened his otherwise convincing polemic when he joked about Kerr's unusually small mouth. Carried away by his humoristic skill, Kraus fell easily into this kind of humor. I believe that his struggle against the *Neue Freie Presse* would have been more respectable if he had not printed an unattractive, extremely Jewish-looking caricature of Benedikt.[3] His case was weakest when, as he often did, he let the whole satire rest on a name, as in the case of Archbishop Kohn; there the name did not even support an argument but stood in lieu of one.

Kraus sincerely believed that he was a great humanitarian and much of his work actually does consist of "*Rettungen*"[4] very much like Lessing's. Nevertheless, he also caused much suffering. In order to clarify a small point of doubtful significance, Kraus was willing to destroy the most cordial relationships or even human beings.

When Kraus hated someone, he continued to attack him until he considered his victim ruined or until, realizing the disproportion between his effort and its object, he tired of him and turned to new victims. Since he rarely praised anyone, not to be mentioned by him was almost a sign of his continued good will.

[1] But a brain in which an altar candle is burning is still brighter than one in the paragraph shaped coils of which the light rays are refracted. *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität* (Wien, 1908), pp. 331 F. Here Kraus was favorably contrasting bigoted Catholics with judges.

[2] Or it is as if the finger which has lifted the veil of private life has been put in the throat. Or even the whole arm of justice. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

[3] *Weltgericht*, I, 132.

[4] Rehabilitation of reputations.

Personal attacks to be viewed as art. As Kraus was very anxious to have all of his activities viewed primarily as artistic expressions, he was very angry with the "stoffliche Leser" (reader for subject matter) who read Kraus's polemics against public figures, but not, for instance, his poetry. His occasional minor polemics, however, often written in involved, almost bizarre style, could hardly be considered art. Readers also were not supposed to read polemics critically enough to examine the facts involved, because as he claimed he never meant concrete individuals. Although he mentioned them by name, he wanted them to be understood as symbols.

Although Kraus theoretically distinguished between polemic and satire so as to consider the latter infinitely farther removed from the facts pure and simple, the lack of a dividing line between the two media is responsible for a growing body of secondary literature about Kraus, based on the problems connected with separating the two.

The satirist as counterpart of the poet. To Kraus, the satirist was the counterpart of the poet. While the latter could give himself up to impressions, the satirist was constantly under unresolved tension between the ideal and reality. His language was, therefore, dramatic, and he was realistic like the true dramatist. A true satirist thrives on tensions, and Kraus throve on the particular ones in Germany and Austria. Thus he believed with Schiller that the true satirist would have been a great poet if the moral perversity of his age had not filled his heart with bitterness. Only a mind like Kraus's own, which sought harmony so intensely and was so very much aware of the ideal, could so strongly feel contradictions, moral wrongs and resentments. Poets were preservers of nature; where that was impossible they became satirists and avengers of nature.[1] Thus satire aimed at finding harmony on a higher level by symbolically clearing away the opponent and destroying his unjustified reputation. Kraus tried to do this with the editor of the *Neue Freie Presse*.

Later, after about 1910, jokes no longer came so easily to Kraus, although it was then that his great period as a satirist started. In a sense he had become wittier than before, but instead of the smaller amount of bitterness which had previously seasoned his humor, bitterness now almost always predominated. The following remark, in which

[1] Rychner calls attention to Chamfort's remarks about wit being a substitute for impossible happiness, and said that Friedrich Schlegel saw in it the outward appearance of imagination; hence its divinity and its closeness to mysticism. (Max Rychner, *Karl Kraus. Zum 25. Jahrestag des Erscheinens der "Fackel."* (Wien: H. Lanyi, 1924, p. 30).

he referred to his aphorisms, is typical: "Ich habe ein grosses Schweineschlachten hinter mir und male jetzt mit dem Blut meine Bilder." [1] Another typical remark is "Da ward mir schwarz und gelb vor den Augen, die Erde drehte sich wie eine Rotationsmaschine, eine Kolumne aus Dreck stieg zum Firmament empor... [2]

There is little need to show how this sentence is packed with allusions pointing beyond itself; black and yellow were the colors of Austria-Hungary, the moving power and the effect behind the catastrophic vision was the press, and the picturesque language reminds one of that of the expressionists, and even of the Apocalypse, as glimpses of an apocalyptic vision are, indeed, frequent with Kraus. Kraus's language had entered a new phase. He was on the road toward a highly involved, carefully constructed idiom of his own, often intelligible only with difficulty, and then still subject to various interpretations; in fact, it was not even intended to be understood by more than a few. As time went on, he wrote more and more for himself and less for communication with others. This development was parallel with Kraus's growing independence of "authorities," who were almost completely absent from his writings by the beginning of the First World War. This book is full of quotations from that period, which although not quoted specifically for the present purpose, will have to suffice, together with the following one which is, to be sure, climactic rather than typical:

Der Mund der Welt steht offen und aus den Augen starrt die Ahnung, dass sich das Grösste begeben hat. Ringsum ist alles gelb. Wie der Tag, an dem Gott sein Gericht hält. Gelb wie eine Chinesenhand und rot wie das Blut einer Christin. Die Hand hat sie gewürgt, dass sie nicht schreien konnte. Die Hand hält uns alle am Hals und lässt uns nicht mehr los. Ist es das Ende einer Moral, die die Fessel als Schmuck trug? ... Sie, die nicht beten konnte, ohne zu huren ... [3]

For both style and content one would look in vain for a similar passage in Kraus's writings of the 1930's. By that time his writings had become more abstract and were reductions to the principles of his own logic.

[1] I have a big slaughtering of swine behind me, and now am painting my pictures with their blood. *Die Fackel*, 345–46 (31 März 1912), 34.

[2] Then all turned black and yellow before my eyes, the earth turned like a rotary printing press, and a column of filth rose up to the firmament... *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[3] The mouth of the world stands open, and out of its eyes stares the dark suspicion that the most monumental event has taken place. Everything all around is yellow. As the day on which God holds His Judgement. Yellow as the hand of a Chinese, and red as the blood of a Christian woman. The hand choked her so that she couldn't scream. The hand holds us all by the throat, never to release us again. Is this the end of a morality which wore the letter as an ornament? She, who could not (even) pray without prostituting herself... *Die chinesische Mauer* (München, 1910) p. 435.

Kraus had been leading a secluded life, and since he had come to be increasingly preoccupied with language, language had also developed for him in a way which increasingly bore his own characteristic stamp. The development of Kraus's language might be compared with that of the language of a colonial people which, separated for a long time from its mother country, to some extent loses contact with the outside world. Only an experienced reader could do justice to the richness of implications and interrelations woven through one of Kraus's essays from this period. Nothing but rather lengthy passages could fully convey the impact of these soliloquies, but the beginning of the essay, "*Die Sprache,*" should serve as an illustration:

Der Versuch, die Sprache als Gestaltung, und der Versuch: ihr als Mitteilung den Wert des Wortes zu bestimmen – beide an der Materie durch das Mittel der Untersuchung beteiligt – scheinen sich in keinem Punkt einer gemeinsamen Kenntnis zu begegnen. Denn wie viele Welten, die das Wort umfasst, haben nicht zwischen der Auskultation eines Verses und der Perkussion eines Sprachgebrauches Raum! Und doch ist es dieselbe Beziehung zum Organismus der Sprache, was da und dort Lebendiges und Totes unterscheidet; denn dieselbe Naturgesetzlichkeit ist es, die in jeder Region der Sprache, vom Psalm bis zum Lokalbericht, den Sinn dem Sinn übermittelt. Kein anderes Element durchdringt die Norm, nach der eine Partikel das logische Ganze umschliesst, und das Geheimnis, wie um eines noch Geringeren willen ein Vers blüht und welkt.[1]

It was, as Kraus saw it, one's intimate knowledge of the nature and the organism of language which ultimately determined the genuineness of the expressions, expressions as infinitely distant from each other as are creation and communication.

At all times Kraus liked to teach his lessons in parables, or in his early years, and strangely enough in view of his self-assurance, by quotations from another author on the same subject. It was characteristic of his style that he expounded his views on women by quoting Harden who had quoted Eckermann on Goethe; at the same time Kraus scolded Harden for having quoted inaccurately.[2]

[1] The attempt to determine language as creation, and the attempt to determine the value of the word as communication – both of which partake of the subject matter by means of the investigation – do not meet in a point of common knowledge. For how many worlds which the word embraces have room between listening to a verse and the percussion of linguistic usage! And yet it is the same relation to the organism of language which distinguishes the living and the dead here as well as there; for it is the same law of nature which distinguishes the living and the dead here and there; for it is the same law of nature which transmits sense to the senses in every region of language, from the psalm down to the local news. No other element penetrates through the norm by which one particle embraces the logical whole, and the secret, how for the sake of something even less significant a verse blooms and withers. "Die Sprache," *Die Sprache*, p. 393. (Written in December 1932, and published posthumously in 1936).

[2] *Literatur und Lüge*, p. 24.

Method. Kraus criticized concrete actions in concrete situations, implying that he wanted general changes to take place on the analogy of particular cases. His satire did not lurk behind the safety of generalities. In order to make it, as he believed, more effective than that of such predecessors as Voltaire and Swift, who had employed names of fictitious people and countries, Kraus called those whom he satirized by their real names or described them so clearly that there could be no question of their identity. Quite often, he used photographs of his victims, these photographs invariably being unflattering ones.[1]

Too much bitterness for satire. In the early years of *Die Fackel,* Kraus quite rightly criticized the superficial satires of his colleagues, and especially of those who wrote for *Simplizissimus;* he himself went to the opposite extreme later on. In his post-war satires there was little left that prompted laughter, and extreme bitterness was taking its place more and more. In fact, after *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit,* where Kraus the satirist showed himself at his best, it can be said that, although he continued to use the same techniques as before, he succeeded relatively rarely in being satirical. What he produced seemed, in comparison with earlier satires, like dead bodies contrasted with living people; they fitted the same descriptions, but they lacked life.

When Kraus wrote a long complaint about really not having been very successful and having succeeded only in ridding some insignificant writers of some insignificant writing habits, one knows very well that this was *Galgenhumor*[2]; if such a passage calls forth any feeling at all, it is sympathy for its writer. Kraus never seemed so pathetic as when he actually bored his readers with one of the satires which were composed with extreme care and contained all of the ingredients which satirical writings are supposed to have:

Der Plauderer ist gewiss eine der schalsten Kreaturen die in unserem geistigen Klima fortkommen. Aber er hängt noch immer eher mit dem schöpferischen Wesen zusammen als der Beobachter und vollends der Psychologe, die bloss den Hausrat der Chuzpe benützen müssen, den die technische Entwicklung des Geisteslebens ihnen in die Hand gespielt hat. Der Amüseur sticht durch eine wertlose Begabung von der Geschicklichkeit des Beobachters ab, so wie sich dieser wieder von der wertlosen Bildung des Psychologen vorteilhaft abhebt. Das sind so die Grundtypen des geistigen Elends, zwischen denen natürlich ebensoviele Varietäten Platz haben, als die organische Welt des Geistes Gelegenheit zum Abklatsch bietet. Nach dem Beobachter steht der Aesthet, der durch Liebe zur Farbe und Sinn für die Nuance ausgezeichnet ist und an den Dingen der Erscheinungswelt so viel noch wahrnimmt, als Schwarz unter den Fingernagel geht.

[1] *Weltgericht,* I, 132.
[2] Humor of the gallows.

Er kann aber auch mit dem Psychologen zu einer besonderen Art von feierlichem Reportertum verschmelzen, zu jenem zwischen Wien und Berlin, also etwa in Prag beliebten Typus, der aus Zusammenhängen und Möglichkeiten zu neuen Sehnsuchten gelangt und in schwelgerischen Adjektiven einbringt, was ihm die Natur an Hauptworten versagt hat. Bei dem jähen Übergang, den gerade dieser Typus von kaufmännischer Karriere in die Literatur durchmacht, wäre ein Dialog wie der folgende nicht bloss ein Zufall, sondern geradezu die Formel für die Komplikationen eines fein differenzierten Seelenlebens: "Hat Pollak [1] aus Gaya bezahlt?" "Das nicht, aber er hat hieratische Gesten." [2]

Quotations. As can be seen in the glosses, Kraus achieved some of his most humorous effects by quoting *verbatim* the speeches or writings of persons who were quite unaware of the humorous possibilities of their statements. There was, for instance, the story of the newspaper editor who had been shaved free of charge according to custom, for no one would dare to charge an editor. Then he bought a penny postcard from the barber who had shaved him magnanimously adding that he would pay for it.[3]

Kraus himself seems to have enjoyed most the jokes for which misprints were really responsible, as, for example, when Hofmannsthal was mentioned in a newspaper among prominent industrialists.[4] All the involuntary humor of which Kraus was not the creator but only the detector belongs in this category, as did the title of one of his satires, which had the abbreviated name of an organization quoted from newspapers: "Ö.G.Z.B.D.G." [5] (Österreichische Gesellschaft zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten).

Picturesque expressions. Frequently Kraus impressed his audiences

[1] Member of a Moravian-Jewish family about which many jokes were circulated.

[2] A chatterer is certainly one of the dullest creatures prospering in our intellectual climate. But he still has more in common with a creative being than an observer and especially than the psychologists who use their every-day tool of impudence which the technological development of intellectual life has placed in their hands. Someone who writes to amuse is clearly distinguishable from the skilled observer by his worthless talent, just as the latter again looks good compared with a psychologist and *his* worthless training. These are about the basic types of intellectual misery among which there is, of course, room for just as many varieties, as the organic world of the mind offers opportunities for copies. After the observer there is the aesthete who is distinguished by his love for color and sense of nuances, and who still takes in as much of the world of appearances as there is black under the finger nail. He can, however, also blend with the psychologist into a special kind of solemn reporter, into that type which is popular between Vienna and Berlin, i.e. perhaps in Prague, which reaches new longings via connections and possibilities, and makes up with overly sentimental adjectives for the nouns which nature has denied him. In view of the sudden transition which this very type of business career undergoes in literature, a dialog such as the following would not be a mere coincidence, but rather the very formula for a finely organized inner life: "Did Pollak from Gaya pay? – No, he didn't, but he has hieratic gestures. *Literatur und Lüge*, p. 52ff.

[3] *Die Fackel*, 132 (Anfang März 1903), 25.

[4] *Ibid.*, 354–56 (29. August 1912), 27.

[5] *Ibid.*, 250 (14 April 1918), 28. Austrian Society to Fight Venereal Diseases.

by merely stating a fact, usually a bitter and wellknown one, in unusual and picturesque language. He sometimes altered a metaphor to fit a situation:

Nein, der Menschheit bleibt keine Narbe zurück! Der Menschheit ist die Kugel bei einem Ohr hinein, und beim andern hinausgegangen.[1]

Humor through surprise. There is another kind of humorous remark in Kraus's work which should, perhaps, be grouped separately under the loose heading of original and surprising remarks, made in a dry, matter-of-fact way. One of the first of these was his "balance sheet" of *Die Fackel*'s first three months. There appeared simply:

Rechenschaftsbericht.

Mit diesem Heft schliesst das I. Quartal der "Fackel"

Anonyme Schmähbriefe	236
,, Drohbriefe	83
Überfälle	1 [2]

The following remark is also typical of the younger Kraus:

Und so wie ich manchmal stilistische Fehler einer journalistischen Äusserung, die ich zitieren will, grossmütig beseitige, um ihre infame Gesinnung wirksamer blosszustellen . . .[3]

Here a sharp word like "infame" added to the effect by jumping unexpectedly out of ambush.

What gave his early satires much of their brilliance was their simplicity and the fact that they were often only repetitions of the claims of Kraus's opponents, although sometimes slightly exaggerated. Thus Kraus said:

. . . Warmhalten neugewonnener "Beziehungen" war mein Sturm und Drang und ein feinsittsames Auskommen im liberalen Zeitungskreise der Inhalt meiner Flegeljahre . . .[4]

Such passages are found most frequently in his writings of the early

[1] No, there is no scar left on mankind! The bullet went in one ear, and out of the other. *Nachts*, p. 71.

[2] Balance Sheet / This issue concludes the first three-months period of *Die Fackel* / Anonymous slanderous letters . . . 236 / Threatening letters . . . 83 / Assaults . . . 1 *Die Fackel*, 9 (Ende Juni 1899), 27. [3] And just as I sometimes magnanimously remove the stylistic mistakes in a journalistic statement which I want to quote, in order to expose its infamous intent more effectively . . . *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität*, p. 200.

[4] The preservation of newly-won connections was the content of my Storm and Stress, and well-mannered "getting along in liberal newspaper circles was the content of my adolescence . . . ." *Die Fackel*, 5 (Mitte Mai 1899), 6.

years of the twentieth century, such as *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität* and essays supplementary to it such as *Die Ära nach dem Prozess Riehl.* (The Era After the Riehl trial.) There he said: "Es ist also ausgemacht: Der Geschlechtsverkehr soll in Österreich abgeschafft werden." [1]

Humor by contrast. Kraus achieved many of his funny effects, funny to those who did not feel too offended, by surprising associations, namely by the contrast of the noble, elevated, or poetic with the prosaic, businesslike, or even intrinsically ridiculous. He wrote about an early Zionist Congress:

Zwischen Basel und Rennes wogt der tausendjährige Schmerz des Judentums, und hier wie dort lauern Propheten, die das Pathos dieser Welt auf die Zeile berechnen.[2]

Suggestions of the sublime and the ridiculous again stood side by side when Kraus asked a young poet for which bank he wrote his poetry [3] or when he made the statement, "... so transzendental wirkt kein irdischer Feigl" [4] referring to a judge who would be ridiculous even without a name meaning in Austrian dialect "little fig." There were instances of the combination of business terminology with lofty religious terms. In addition, there were similar humorous expressions based on the additional effect of the shocking. These included the following: "So wahr Kopfjucken keine Gehirntätigkeit ist, so wenig habe ich Herrn Julius Bauer je für einen Schriftsteller gehalten ..." [5]

Sometimes not a statement, but the description of an action was humorous. So, for instance, Kraus told this story: He had his publisher Lanyi send a note to the *Burgtheater* with the information that Kraus was going to read *Macbeth* to his audience and with the suggestion that the manager of the *Burgtheater* send his actors to that lecture before their performance of *Macbeth.*[6]

Often Kraus made an effective attack by means of a parallel or comparison. He once wondered why a judge should be permitted to become a decent person again, but not a prostitute. Again, in answer to the court's criticism of a man who had been released on bail and went to night clubs, he remarked:

[1] It is all settled; sexual intercourse is to be abolished in Austria. *Ibid.*, 216 (9. Jänner 1907), 10.

[2] Between Basel and Rennes surges the thousand-year-old pain of Jewry, and here as well as there lurk prophets who charge for the pathos of this world by the line. *Ibid.*, 14 (August 1899), 3.

[3] *Sprüche und Widersprüche*, p. 178.

[4] ... no earthly Feigl seems so transcendental. *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität*, p. 215.

[5] As truly as an itching of the head is not an activity of the brain, I have never considered Mr. Julius Bauer a poet ... *Die Fackel*, 172 (31. Dezember 1904) 10.

[6] *Ibid.*, 726–29 (Juni 1926), 68f.

Man kann aber ganz unschuldig aus solchem Nachtlokal hervorgehen, beinahe so unschuldig wie aus einer Gerichtsverhandlung, in der man zu drei Monaten verurteilt wurde.[1]

Attraction due to wit. Most people who flocked around Kraus were actually attracted by how rather than by what he spoke and wrote. He was witty, and his wit was largely akin to that of his Viennese readers. Many of them claim that one has, in order to appreciate it fully, to be familiar with all the subtle connotations and shades of meaning that words, phrases, names, and situations had to this group. Until the 1950's, Kraus was, in fact, read very little outside of Austria and his native Bohemia.

Humor in language. Kraus was convinced that language was the only true source of humor; whether or not a situation was laughable depended, to him, entirely on its re-creation in words. Again and again he repeated what might be called his theory of the imperishability of linguistic humor, perhaps because he was very capable of producing this type of humor and not at all able to appreciate or artistically create humor inherent in a situation.

Since much of his humor was based on such devices as double meanings, sounds, or the substitution of letters by which new words were formed, it is largely untranslatable. His work abounds with remarks like the following: "Mein lieber Lippowitz! Schneiden tut weh. Kleben Sie wohl!" This witticism alluded to that editor's plagiaristic methods.[2] If such instances of humor lived and died with the framework which produced them, that was true to an even greater extent of such remarks as the following:

... der liebe Gott sei schon müde, eine Welt erschaffen zu haben, deren jede Bewegung ein Dreh ist. ...[3]

Here the humor was based on the one word "*Dreh*" meaning "swindle."

Claim of superiority. Considering himself to be one of the greatest humorists of all time, Kraus claimed, as we have seen, not always justifiedly, to adhere to lofty principles:

[1] One can, however, also leave such a night spot completely innocent, almost as innocent as a session in court in which one was condemned to three months in jail. *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität*, p. 215.

[2] My dear Lippowitz! Cutting hurts. Glue well. (L. was an editor in Vienna.) Changed from the German saying: Scheiden tut weh (parting hurts). Similarly, Kleben (paste together) Sie wohl, sounds like: Leben Sie wohl (farewell). *Die Fackel*, 161 (5 Mai 1904), 24.

[3] ... that the dear Lord is already tired of having created a world every movement of which is a dishonest trick. (drehen = to turn, Dreh = distortion). *Untergang*, p. 284.

... Den Anteil, den die Intimität des Dialekts wie der Stofflichkeit an der komischen Wirkung hat, verschmäht die Satire ...[1]

Kraus always satirized people as typical of groups, every object of attack was to him a specimen, and usually the worst, of its kind. He never merely enjoyed the ridiculous aspects of any person or thing, but saw them as signs of major disasters. In this sense he was justified in claiming that his satires always had ethical significance, as distinguished from those of other writers who wrote on the excessive self-assurance of the *Fiaker* [2] or the sharp tongues of mothers-in-law.

Perishability of linguistic humor. The appeal of Kraus's humor rested upon the combination of witticism and passion, by virtue of which he was able to make any content interesting. There will always be linguistic humor, but since Kraus's criticism of the times depended on too many ephemeral factors as to content, much of it was bound to be forgotten.

Kraus's utterances on his own writing. The frequency of Kraus's allusions to his own activity as a writer was probably as great as that of his references to himself and to his own position in the world of letters. Writing was to him a matter of great enjoyment and of great labor:

In der literarischen Arbeit finde ich Genuss und der literarische Genuss wird mir zur Arbeit. Um das Werk eines anderen Geistes zu geniessen, muss ich mich erst kritisch dazu anstellen, also die Lektüre in eine Arbeit verwandeln. Darum werde ich noch immer leichter ein Buch schreiben als lesen.[3]

Partly by the intentional ambiguity of his words, and partly by extremely frequent parenthetical clauses he forced the reader to read slowly:

Man muss meine Arbeiten zweimal lesen, um Geschmack daran zu finden. Aber ich habe auch nichts dagegen, dass man sie dreimal liest. Lieber ist er mir, man liest sie überhaupt nicht, als bloss einmal. Die Kongestionen eines Dummkopfs, der keine Zeit hat, möchte ich nicht verantworten.[4]

Language as judge of good and evil. Whereas Kraus hardly ever took

[1] ... Satire scorns the part which the intimacy of the dialect or subject matter has in creating a comic effect .... *Ibid.*, p. 153.

[2] Driver of horse-and-coach in Vienna.

[3] In literary work I find enjoyment, and enjoyment becomes work for me. In order to enjoy the work of another mind, I must first take a critical attitude toward it, that is to say, I must transform reading into work. Therefore I shall always find it easier to write a book than to read one. *Sprüche und Widersprüche*, pp. 169f.

[4] One must read my works twice to develop a taste for them. I don't object to people reading them three times. I prefer for them not to be read at all, rather than only once. I would not want to be responsible for the mental congestions of a fool who has no time. *Ibid.*, pp. 164f.

sides with one political movement against another, he "sided" with the spirit of language and with the beauty and truth accumulated in it throughout the ages against platitudes, insincerity, pretense, and appearance. And just as, according to medieval sagas, the slain man's wound started to bleed when the murderer approached, so Kraus and his followers believed the *cliché* phrase betrayed itself when quoted by him. Like Novalis, he listened *into* words for their proper meaning.

With Goethe und Herder, Kraus felt language at its best to be passionate speech, and the very source of the life and of the unique character of the people who spoke it. Being that, it was in the camp of the good, and was able to decide between good and evil. Kraus agreed with Ruskin's statement that in order to write well one had to be a good man. Civilization was wrong in assuming that noble expression could be learned through grammar and accentuation. Language which was only seemingly true was without lasting strength; as long as language corresponded to lasting principles, however, it was capable of development. In order to be truthful and to acquire a great style, one should read only what the authors actually believed. It was possible to understand the language of an individual or a people only through knowledge of the temperaments involved. A great people had a great language, for a great language inspired great deeds.

Kraus applied this moral theory of language to his stylistic analyses:

Wo eifernd etwa gleichmässig abhängige Sätze ohne äussere Verbindung koordiniert werden, liest man Insubordination hinein, und das ganze Satzgefühl weist auf die Abhängigkeit, die durch den Impetus einer verzweifelten Logik dem eigenen Wahrheitsdrang widerstreitet ... die Sprache selbst rächt, wenn sittliche Wesenheit einem äusseren Diktat gehorcht ... mit der Analyse eines Stils, der so ganz und gar der Mensch selbst ist, in dem jener verlegen stottert, weil dieser nicht lügen kann ... die Einsicht: ob einer echt und wahr, ob er oberflächlich und verlogen ist, das erkenne man daran wie er zu Karl Kraus steht liesse sich im Fassungsraum einer und derselben Persönlichkeit bestätigen, und Sprachkritik wäre der Behelf, um das Echte und Wahre noch an der Abirrung anschaulich zu machen.[1]

Thus, in Erich Heller's words, the proverb *de gustibus non est*

[1] Where for instance equally dependent clauses are coordinated without any outward relation, one senses insubordination, and one's whole feeling about the sentence points at the dependence which through the impetus of desperate logic contradicts one's own striving for freedom... language itself takes revenge, when moral essence obeys an outward dictate ... with the analysis of a style which is so entirely the man himself, in which the former stutters with embarrassment because the latter cannot lie ... whether someone is genuine and true, whether he is superficial and untruthful, can be discovered in his attitude toward Karl Kraus- this realization could be confirmed within the sphere (of comprehension) of one and the same person, and linguistic criticism would be the means of making still clearly visible in the aberration that which is genuine and true. *Die Fackel*, 657–67 (August 1924), 15.

disputandum was, even when referring to matters of style, a sign of moral bankruptcy. There was to Kraus but a short step from the maltreatment of words to that of human souls and bodies. It seems that he felt he was even avenging lives by restoring words.[1]

[1] Cf. p. 199 of Erich Heller, *The Disinherited Mind.*

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE, LITERARY FIGURES, AND CRITICISM

View of literature not purely aesthetic. Although a large part of Kraus's writings dealt with literature and art, his criteria were far from exclusively aesthetic. His view of a writer was determined less by literary quality than by political, social, or ethical ideas enunciated by him, or expressed in his conduct. This should not be surprising if we remember how preoccupied Kraus was with the ethical use of all language, in a sense the raw material of literature, and especially with the ethics of its users in general. He would have liked to believe that only good people use good language and write good literature, and was annoyed when he often found the opposite to be true. The history of literature, being a part of the history of civilization, reflected it in every age. Literary greatness might therefore be determined by the greatness of the civilization; thus Nestroy's comedies reflecting the *Biedermeier* period were, it seemed to Kraus, much greater than the operettas of the early twentieth century Lehár. A writer and his work could, however, stand out from the emptiness of his age as did, for example in his opinion, Peter Altenberg.

Main criticism is commercialism of writers. Kraus's critique dealt largely, except for classics, with the writers contemporary to him. His view of modern literature formed part of his analysis of modern civilization. Believing that the spirit of capitalism had corroded literature as much as it had every other aspect of modern thought, he attempted to show the commercialization underlying modern art in his critique of its examples. He was extremely concerned with the conduct of the artist, and his often merely commercial interest in literature.

Die demolierte Literatur. In Kraus's first independently published work, *Die demolierte Literatur*, 1897, one could already detect the main motifs of his later literary criticism. The occasion for writing the

little satire was the plan [1] to tear down the *Café Griensteidl* in which the young literati of the *Sezession* had been congregating. Kraus sarcastically told of its advantages: *Meyer's Lexikon*, the draftiness of the room, and the intimacy of the waiters. Most of the young writers were symbolists and therefore all wrote alike; one could distinguish them by their pseudonyms. "Bald war man mit dem konsequenten Realismus fertig, und Griensteidl stand im Zeichen des Symbolismus!"[2] They all copied their leader, Hermann Bahr, *den Linzer*,[3] and reveled in such terms as *müde Grazie der Formen* or *müde Stimmung*,[4] in short, in sentences suggesting faded old silk, and in names reminiscent of Spanish theater programs and Portuguese street signs. Having neither a sense of humor nor a point of view, some of them tried to act queer and some "dionysiac," hoping to remind people of Goethe; some pretended to understand the plastic arts, and others dabbled in philosophy. Although none of them had any literary talent, and they were described as *le goût juif* [5] in France, they proudly called themselves *die Sezession*. Kraus also joked about the extreme youth of most of these artists and about their changeable political views and poses. They made a virtue of turning away from current issues to moods. Of course, they had not yet got around to producing and were still busy defining their principles as well as displaying the pecularities of their daily habits. Thus, for instance, they insisted on strange colors in their ice cream, and although their clothes were extremely important to them, they constantly toyed with the idea of death. Kraus described several individuals from the *Café Griensteidl* who, while now for the most part having passed into oblivion, could easily be identified by contemporary readers. These persons spent most of their time running from table to table, congratulating each other on the excellence of their work. They strove to have either a *Charakterkopf* [6] or a *Dulderantlitz* or both, received tremendous impulses from insignificant phenomena, and loved everything strange and diseased, believing themselves to be influenced by Baudelaire. The destruction of the *Griensteidl* meant the exodus. What, Kraus asked himself in comic despair, would become of the future of literature?

Literature as another moneymaking racket. These ridiculous poseurs

[1] Evidently of the owner's or of the city of Vienna.

[2] Soon one was finished with consistent realism, and (Café) Griensteidl became symbolist. *Die demolierte Literatur*, p. 6.

[3] H. Bahr of Linz.

[4] Tired gracefulness of forms, or tired mood.

[5] Jewish taste.

[6] Perhaps: impressive face, face of a martyr.

were harmless compared with those to whom literature was a business. To what extent, in Kraus's opinion, literature had become commercialized could be seen by his quotation of such a newspaper advertisement as this:

Schriftsteller sucht per sofort einen fruchtbaren und erfolgreichen Literaten mit originellem Erfindungsvermögen ... zur schnelleren Erledigung vorliegender Aufträge.[1]

Kraus went so far as to deduce from such evidence that one could not trust the sincerity of any contemporary writers, since they were all businessmen. Almost without exception, he viewed in that way the musicians, painters, and actors of his time. Not only the theatrical producer Max Reinhardt – whose work, as Kraus quipped, clearly bore traces of his origin in the textile business – but also such people as Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss could just as well have made money in another "racket." Kraus made no distinction between them and certain contemporary playwrights who placed commercial advertisements in their plays.[2] As usual, Kraus did nothing to prove the justification of his accusations, merely relying on his wit or on the perplexing extremeness of his expressions. While it is true that he understood the greatness of some writers long before they were generally appreciated, Kraus was able to say that he could not imagine anyone pronouncing the names of Hofmannsthal and Schnitzler reverently after fifty years. Irrelevantly, and in spite of his own comfortable standard of living, he was suspicious of contemporary writers because of their usually quite good economic situation and often held up to them poets like the extremely poor Liliencron.[3]

Pretense of refinement. Very much as he already had in *Die demolierte Literatur*, he attacked throughout his life writers' pretenses to distinction and refinement. Because they were hard to prove, Kraus's views were probably accepted by very few outside the circle of his close followers. He might have been more successful in redirecting the reading habits of the public if he had not attacked so indiscriminately, including, in my opinion, such upright men as Stefan Zweig in the following excerpt:

Herr Stefan Zweig, heute einer der repräsentativen Schmuser der europäischen

[1] Writer wants immediately imaginative and successful (ghost) writer with original ideas for the purpose of filling outstanding orders more quickly. *Die Fackel*, 171 (17. Dezember 1904), 18.

[2] *Ibid.*, 62 (Mitte Dezember 1900), 15ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, 657–67 (August 1924), 61f.

Kultur, ... in der Seichtigkeit seiner tiefen Sätze ... Emil Ludwig und Stefan Zweig heben den Zeitgenossen liftartig auf ein Niveau ... [1]

Modern literature rested for Kraus upon a socio-economic class, the bourgeoisie. It was for him, as it was for the Social Democrats or the political Catholics, the class which evolved around the money-making ideal. The writers whom Kraus criticized came largely from the upper, often Jewish, bourgeoisie of Vienna.

Favored Biedermeier. Great literature was that before the leveling process of the nineteenth century and was especially embodied in the literature of the *Biedermeier* period. What attracted Kraus so much to the literature of that time was basically the group of characteristics distinguishing it from later literary works: it was primarily the cautious, almost reverent way in which it was written and the environments it either described or suggested, which seemed peaceful and idyllic to Kraus. Nestroy's plays still seemed to portray whole worlds in a nutshell, whereas modern works presented only incomplete and yet confusingly intricate segments. As Kraus saw that period of outward calm in Germany and Austria, it was an idyllic world of small tradesmen and landlords, undisturbed by the large-scale evils of the twentieth century, mainly the overly powerful press. This view becomes clear from Kraus's many evaluative comparisons with the present:

Diese Gegenwart ... sie hätte es am liebsten, wenn man ihr sagte, der Vormärz verhalte sich zu ihr wie ein Kerzelweib zu einer Elektrizitätsgesellschaft. Der wissenschaftlichen Wahrheit würde es aber besser anstehen, wenn man ihr sagte, der Vormärz sei das Licht und sie sei die Aufklärung.[2]

Unser notorisches Geistesleben mit dem des Vormärz zu vergleichen, ist eine so beispiellose Gemeinheit gegen den Vormärz ...[3]

Emphasis on language. The basic assumption of Kraus's literary criticism rested on his conception of language which to him was fundamental to the greatness of a civilization and of its art. He believed that romanticism and especially *Biedermeier* with the clear and precise as well as

[1] Mr. Stefan Zweig, today one of the representative *causeurs* on European culture ... in the shallowness of his profound statements ... Emil Ludwig and Stefan Zweig ... lift their contemporaries in elevator-like fashion onto a higher level... *Die Fackel*, 726–29 (Juni 1926), 55f.

[2] The people of our time ... they would prefer to be told that the time before the revolution of 1830 stands in the same relation to their time as an old candlemaker to an electric power company. But one would be closer to scientific truth if one told them that the pre-revolutionary time is light, and that their time is enlightenment. *Nestroy und die Nachwelt* (Nestroy and Posterity) (Wien, 1912), p. 20.

[3] To compare our notorious intellectual life with that of the time prior to 1830 is so unprecedentedly mean ... *Ibid.*, p. 21.

melodious use of language viewed it as a medium of art. The commercialization of literature, which made artistic value relative to commercial demand, expressed itself in the destruction of the ideal of linguistic perfection.

The importance which Kraus attributed to language explains why he placed Nestroyan farces above naturalistic plays of social intent. As will be seen later in the discussion of the operetta, Kraus at times expressed the belief that language, like poetry and music, was a group of symbols with a more than logical meaning, and was hence more important than a content that could be understood by reason alone. He was forever preoccupied with the problem that there could be good poetry written by a bad person:

> Worüber ich nicht hinwegkomme: Dass eine ganze Zeile von einem halben Menschen geschrieben sein könne. Dass auf dem Flugsand eines Charakters ein Werk erbaut wäre.[1]

Always comparing people with himself, he must have done so with painful feelings when he could not help admitting that people whom he considered ethically inferior to himself wrote better poetic works. In some cases he solved the problem by speculating about the deterioration of the poet's character. He almost had to do that in the case of Hauptmann, since he had first praised *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* [2] highly and then, within the framework of his total pacifist outlook, had to condemn Hauptmann's behavior during World War I.

Necessity of great poetry's being free from causal relationships. Kraus was convinced that great poetry could only be that which did not set out to be poetry and was not written for advantage or for decoration. Just as in neither madness nor dreams did man seek out human company merely to propagate the race or for any other ulterior purpose, so also was poetry not interested in intended or possible results or effects. The most poetic was that which had entirely freed itself of subordination to social, economic, and other exigencies alien to art as such, thus making possible the freedom of the two great poles, mind and sex. This, however, does not contradict my thesis that Kraus's view of literature was essentially cultural. Modern poetry, because of the nature of modern civilization, had for him lost the capacity to free itself from these relations and thus to be art for its own sake.

Poetry and madness. Kraus must have been aware of the element of

[1] I can't get over this: that a whole line can be written by half a person. That a work should be built on the quicksand of a character. *Nachts* (Wien, 1919), p. 210.

[2] Hannele's Ascension to Heaven.

conscious formation which enters in the case of poetry, thus distinguishing it from madness, but he did not say so when he reprinted what he considered some of the most beautiful poetry and the greatest German prose ever written, poetry and prose which had been composed in part, and possibly in entirety, by inmates of the Cernauti Insane Asylum.[1] His publication of these poems is, incidentally, one of the clearest expressions of Kraus's desire for justice, of his wish that everything be seen in the light which it deserved. It is an instance of the *Rettungen* mentioned earlier. To be able to read such poetry was, Kraus felt, a great relief from the straight jacket of the norms of a world shocked when a child was drawn in the nude but silent when it was massacred.[2]

Asking the reader to compare the following excerpts with contemporary "great" poetry, Kernstock, Hainisch and Werfel, he quoted from the poems of Karl Piehowitz, locksmith, an inmate of the Cernauti asylum.[3]

Ein Trunk der Liebe

Lass uns in dem Silberglanz,
den die Birken grün umhüllen,
unsrer Herzen Krüge ganz
mit der tiefen Stille füllen! etc.

Frühling
... und in tiefer Nacht
hörst du warme Tropfen fallen
Alles Schwere sinkt
von den Dingen, die sich weiten,
und die Erde trinkt
Wunder der Entbundenheiten.[4]

Kraus asked the reader to exert all his spiritual strength to find his way back from the desert in which he lived to the plane on which that

[1] *Die Fackel*, 781–86 (Anfang Juni 1928), 95f.
[2] *Ibid.*, 800–5 (Anfang Februar 1929), 75ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, 781–86 (Anfang Juni 1928), 91ff.
[4] A Drink to Love / Let us in the silvery light / Covered by the birch-green veil / Fill the pitchers of our hearts / With the quiet of the deep / etc. Spring. ... and in the dark night / you hear warm drops falling / All that's heavy sinks / From the things which widen / And the earth drinks / Wonders of being free in space. *Ibid.*, p. 97ff.

locksmith lived, who spelled and recited his poems like a child in the first grade and to such a beginning where there was the word.[1]

... Nur auf den höchsten Gipfeln deutscher Lyrik ... in wenigen Strophen von Claudius, Hölderlin oder Mörike, heute in Zeilen Trakls oder der Lasker-Schüler, ist, im erhabenen Einklang von Gesicht und Gehör, so Gestalt geworden, was ein Herz und die Natur einander zu sagen haben ...[2]

Kraus dwelt particularly on the poem: "*Die junge Tänzerin,*" [3] of which he said that: "... das Lebendigste, das deutsche Lyriker dem Frauenleib abgesehen und abgesungen haben, ..." [4] was (dead) paper compared with it:

Eine Wolke weisser Seide
spiegelt rauschend jeden Schritt;
mystisch wandeln unterm Kleide
Blut und Hauch und Atem mit.[5]

"... seine irdische Person," he exclaimed, "entschuldigt für alle Lyrik, die aus Normalhirnen über uns hereinbricht," [6] Kraus was most impressed by a prose passage written by another inmate of the asylum.

Agreeing very decidely with Kraus as to its value, and interested in the phenomenon of artistic production by the insane, I am reproducing most of this poem in prose *verbatim:*

... und mein Schmerz ist so gross, dass alles Gute und Teuerste der Welt meine wehbrennenden Wunden nicht mehr heilen kann. Die Sonne weint, der Wind ist traurig; der Schnee ist ganz blau geworden und die Au still. Der Mond ist vertieft; denn alle leiden meinen Schmerz. Von meinen Tränen zerspringt der Beton der Kerkerzelle. Das schwere Eisen frisst sich langsam zu meinen Knochen durch. Alles, alles fühlt, alles sieht mein Leid und mein unverschuldetes Unglück, Totes und Lebendiges, nur ein menschliches Wesen nicht. Unglücklich bin ich, ja der Unglücklichste unter Unglücklichen. – Nach meiner Gefangennahme in tiefster Trauer ist mein Jagdhund gestorben; gleich darauf alle Hühner; gleich darauf meine Kuh. Mein Kind wurde geboren und die Sonne hat ihm weinend durchs Fenster mein unverschuldetes Unglück verkündet und nach ein paar Tagen

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 96.

[2] Only on the highest peaks of German lyric poetry ... in a few strophes by Claudius, Hölderlin or Mörike, today in the words of Lasker-Schüler, has the same lofty harmony of vision and sound found the expression of what a heart and nature have to say to each other. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

[3] The young dancer.

[4] ... the most a live expression of what German lyric poets have seen in and sung of the female body. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

[5] A cloud of white silk / rustling mirrors every step; / Mystically under the dress / Blood and breath walk along. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

[6] ... his secular person makes up for all the so-called lyric poetry which breaks in on us from "normal brains" ... *Ibid.*, p. 99.

wurde es traurig nach dem Vater und ein paar Tage später verliess es die verhasste Welt – und gerade heute wird es zu Grabe getragen, ohne Vater und Mutter, nur von Freunden begleitet; denn der Vater wird gemartert und die Mutter hat fast ganz die Welt vergessen, und das Kind und den Vater, liegt aber still im Bette, die Kerze in der Hand haltend und sieht gen Himmel. Ich habe nichts mehr, nichts auf Erden.[1]

Kraus felt that not even Hamlet's expression of his desire that his flesh melt away could be compared with this poem.

At the occasion of the discovery of these poems, Kraus explained that the greatness of a poem could be the result of a coincidence or misunderstanding which made one substitute for the word originally intended a different one which happened to be exactly right. Furthermore, Kraus said, the poems from the asylum proved that the spheres of creation and of destruction were so close to each other that they merged, and a destroyed mind could create all the more freely because it lacked the usual obligations or inhibitions.

Inferiority of the novel. In Kraus's opinion, a novelist, the opposite of the uninhibited great poet, was one whose skill was not great enough for a higher form of literature. He believed that a novel made it easy to hide one's lack of something significant to say. The novel was, therefore, the escape of those who, lacking the delicacy to be selective, have to express everything. He was convinced ..." dass ein Satz von Peter Altenberg ... einen Wiener Roman aufwiegt ..."[2] He quite frequently made it clear that he was disinterested in novels.[3] Being created outside the spirit of language they were understandable to even the commonest mind and hence were the only lucrative form of literature.[4]

As time went on, and starting with the novel, Kraus restricted his

[1] ... and my pain is so great, that all that is good and dear in the world can no longer heal my sore-burning wounds. The sun weeps, the wind is sad; the snow has turned quite blue and the meadow is still. The moon is deeply concerned, for all suffer my pain. My tears make the concrete of the prison cell burst. The heavy iron eats its way through to my bones. Everything feels, everything sees my sorrow and my innocent misfortune, nature, animate and inanimate, feels, but no human being. I am unhappy, indeed, the unhappiest among the unhappy. After my capture my hunting dog died; in deepest sadness, immediately afterward, all the chickens, then my cow. My child was born, and the sun cried and announced to it my undeserved misfortune, and a few days later it became sad about its father. Then a few days later it left the hated world... and this very day it is being carried to its grave accompanied neither by a father nor by a mother, only by friends; for the father is being tortured and the mother has almost forgotten about the whole world, also about the child and the father, but lies quietly in bed, holding a candle in her hand, and looks toward heaven. I have nothing, nothing left on earth. *Ibid.*, pp. 95f.

[2] ... that a sentence by Peter Altenberg ... is worth as much as a Viennese novel ... *Ibid.*, 374 (Mai 1913), 16.

[3] *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 107.

[4] *Untergang*, p. 229.

occupation with literature and art more and more, limiting himself to few works and authors and claiming that he was coming to see their faults to such an extent that they no longer afforded him any relaxation; strangely enough, he claimed that human material, not touched by artistic creators, did.[1]

Extremeness of his views. There was no such thing for Kraus as an unemotional appraisal. Although he hated most of the time, nevertheless, he was also, contrary to the dicta of critics only superficially acquainted with him, very enthusiastic about a number of writers. In some cases he praised these persons only once and never mentioned them again, which is surprising considering the extreme importance he ascribed to some of them. Thus he called the German humorist, Rudolf Wilke, one of the greatest who ever lived.[2] Much more confusing was Kraus's estimate of Nietzsche as "... den strengsten Geist des Jahrhunderts ...," [3] considering that from then on he spoke of Nietzsche only negatively. Kraus's praise was always extreme: thus, Frank Wedekind was "... der einzige freie Geist der neudeutschen Welt, ..." [4] and of Adolf Loos he said: "... dass er ... die reinere Wahrheit spricht, als die meisten meiner Mitbürger, ..." [5]

Incidental references to favorite authors. Although Kraus for instance considered Liliencron one of the greatest German authors, he merely expressed himself about him in a few such phrases as "das stärkste lyrische Naturell seit Lenau." [6] His enthusiasm for Goethe was even greater, but again he did not explain it by literary analysis. In fact, while Kraus's literary selections are evidence of very good taste, he was not at all articulate about them. With the significant exception of *Nestroy und die Nachwelt* (Nestroy and Posterity), he restricted his extensive discussions of authors and works of literature to negative ones. He almost invariably discussed such side issues as their attitudes toward various problems rather then their literary merits or demerits. Thus the main aspect of Shakespeare, in addition to his prophetic vision of which he clearly showed his appreciation was his sense of justice. Again, except for a very favorable remark about a certain passage in

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 378.
[2] *Die chinesische Mauer* (The Chinese Wall). pp. 150f.
[3] ... the most disciplined spirit of the century. *Die Fackel*, 51 (Ende August 1900), 19.
[4] ... the only free spirit of the new German world, ... *Ibid.*, 890–905 (Ende Juli 1934), 16.
[5] ... that he ... speaks purer truth than most of my fellow-citizens, ... *Ibid.*, 800–5 (Anfang Februar 1929), 54.
[6] The strongest lyric temperament since Lenau. *Ibid.*, 163 (31. Mai 1904) 18.

The Picture of Dorian Gray,[1] his esteem for Oscar Wilde was merely implied in *Fackel* quotations from the latter's works; directly Kraus said only that Wilde should not be persecuted for being a homosexual if nature made him one.[2]

Acceptance and rejection of writers. Especially as far as the modern period was concerned, Kraus made his own selection of literature independently of the traditionally accepted works. It is much easier for one who has become acquainted with his literary taste to sense his criteria than to describe or enumerate them.

What did the poets he loved so much have in common? The first factor which strikes one is their closeness to life, to actual, personally felt experience. The fictitious components of their works never outweighed that which was in any way humanly significant. This trait was usually coupled with simplicity and sincerity. Goethe, Matthias Claudius, and Peter Altenberg were not in the least fashion-bound and therefore kept their maximum appeal at all times when fashion did not overshadow taste. Kraus revered Shakespeare as one who knew human nature and was a judge of mankind.

The writers whom he accepted and loved were the childlike, the seekers, the immediate, the very much moved, the wise, and those whom he considered all-embracing. For Kraus, no one was a writer of *belles lettres* unless he was a poet. Without sufficient explanation, he rejected many whose greatness has rarely been doubted, including even Hofmannsthal and George, and never felt obliged to explain his judgment. He believed unshakably in the infallibility of his instinct to distinguish between the genuine and the false:

> Kein Erlebnis könnte spannender sein als die Enthüllung eines Dichters. Wie sich allmählich die Distanz zwischen seinen echtesten Zeilen und dem Menschen aufzutun beginnt.[3]

The humanity of good authors lay not only in their self-expression in the narrower sense, but often in their sincere wish to bring about social reforms. Such humanitarian convictions were often expressed in the poetic works of Wedekind, Brecht, and the early Hauptmann. Believing that the ethical and the aesthetic usually occurred together, Kraus thought that someone who produced aesthetic values on a high level with a deep insight into nature and especially human nature, deserved at least our attention when treating ethical problems. The

[1] *Ibid.*, 151 (4 Jänner 1904), 18.
[2] *Ibid.*, 173 (1b Jänner 1905) 12ff.
[3] No experience could be more exciting than the discovery of a poet. How gradually the distance between his most genuine lines and the man becomes evident.

motto of *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität* consisted of a series of quotations from Shakespeare's plays. It was almost uncanny how they, taken mostly from *Measure for Measure* and concerning a city called Vienna, fitted the contemporary Viennese problems with which Kraus dealt on the succeeding pages. Just as a Christian writer might quote from the Scriptures as his final authority, Kraus used this half-dozen of Shakespearean quotations to present, sometimes generally and symbolically, the main thoughts expressed in the book. Kraus stated:

Shakespeare hat alles vorausgewusst. Die Dialogstellen aus "Mass für Mass" und "Lear," die ich zum Motto dieser Betrachtung wählte, enthalten das letzte Wort, das über die Moral, die jenen Prozess ermöglichte und blähte, zu sagen ist, und selbst der Zufall, der den Dichter für die Eigenart einer moralverpesteten Stadt den Namen Wien finden liess, mag die in alle Fernen reichende divinatorische Kraft des Genies bestärken.[1]

The reverence which Kraus accorded the poet whom he considered the greatest in this ethical sensitivity may be appreciated in the following words:

Ich habe den Ruf eines Heutigen:[2] "O Gott, was bist du für ein Shakespeare!" nie für eine Gotteslästerung, wohl aber desselben Autors Behauptung, dass in der Westminsterabtei "Shakespeare und die anderen englischen Könige ruhen," stets für eine Majestätsbeleidigung Shakespeares gehalten. Von ihm müssten die Moralbauherren aller Völker Werkzeug und Mörtel entlehnen, von seiner Höhe bietet jede Weltansicht, die konservative wie die fortschrittliche, ein dem Schöpfer wohlgefälliges Bild; dort ist Kultur, wo die Gesetze des Staates paragraphierte Shakespearegedanken sind . . .[3]

Kraus seems to have considered himself Shakespeare's guardian to such an extent that he watched jealously for any attempts not only to translate, or edit, but also to perform any of Shakespeare's dramas. Especially Gundolf was accused of ruining Shakespeare by his translations.[4]

[1] Shakespeare knew everything ahead of time. The parts of dialogs taken from "Measure for Measure" and "Lear," which I have chosen as the motto of this meditation, contain the last word that can be said about the morality which made this trial possible, and which inflated it, and even the coincidence which let the poet find the name Vienna for a morally poisoned city may confirm one's faith in the divinatory power of genius reaching beyond the expanse of time. *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität*, p. 5.

[2] Peter Altenberg.

[3] I have never considered the exclamation of a contemporary: Oh God, what a Shakespeare thou art! a blasphemy, but have rather thought of the same author's assertion that in Westminster Abbey "Shakespeare and the other English kings rest" a lèse majesté for Shakespeare. It is from him that the architects of morality of all peoples would have to borrow tools and mortar, it is from his height that every world view, the conservative as well as the progressive, offers a perspective pleasing to the Creator. Culture exists where the laws of the land are Shakespearean thoughts in the form of legal paragraphs . . . *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität*, p. 5.

[4] *Die Fackel*, 724–25 (April 1926), 4ff.

Typically of Kraus, who in hate as well as love went to the uttermost extremes, he compelled his audience, almost by moral force, to listen to a recital of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* after having lured them into his lecture hall by pretending he would read from his own works. Since his audience consisted mostly of people with great cultural pretenses, they could not leave when Kraus introduced *Timon of Athens* by saying that he "feels the work to be his own" and identified himself with its hero.[1] The fact that, among Shakespeare's other works, *King Lear*, a play to the hero of which he could feel personally close, was his favorite, also seems to point to non-aesthetic criteria in Kraus's judgement.

Rejection of authors on nonessential grounds. Kraus rarely based his rejection of an author on the repudiation of the generally accepted basis of his fame. Thus, he never appraised Tolstoy's work as a whole, but did little more than hint that the Russian's views in old age were an expression of senility. Furthermore, striking a blow at the reading public, he said that a man who ate grass and called Shakespeare an imbecile was bound to be considered a saint by his age.

Criticisms of contemporaries. With very few exceptions, Kraus disliked the writings of his contemporaries as well as the writers themselves. He usually dealt with men and works together, placing most of the emphasis on the former. Thus, although Kraus has been called a literary critic, it would be more accurate to call him a critic of writers. His criticisms consist of expressions of extreme generalized disgust and, upon rare occasions, praise. Only very seldom did his criticism contribute to the understanding of literature. Very often when scolding an author, while boasting of not having read his work, he used as his main criterion the writer's public behavior and stand on public issues. There may be room for this kind of criticism, but it is not literary criticism.

Thus, in a gloss of half a page, one learns little more than that Kraus considered Hofmannsthal a "feineres Formentalent" [2] than George. Similarly, Kraus's opinion that Hauptmann was in 1934 a figure more pitiful than any of the ones he had created [3] is hardly literary criticism. The most concrete phrase of criticism Kraus would give concerning Thomas Mann, who wrote some of his greatest works during Kraus's

[1] *Ibid.*, 845–46 (Dezember 1930), 30ff.
[2] A finer formal talent. *Die Fackel*, 79 (Anfang Juli 1901), 21.
[3] *Ibid.*, 890–905 (Ende Juli 1934), 69ff.

life time, was: "Der Unpathetiker, der dem Schmock das ihm Gemässe liefert ...[1]

Altenberg. Unlike many such passing interests as Karl Hauer,[2] Peter Altenberg was the one person to whom Kraus returned again and again with the same extreme love and enthusiasm. He never loved another poet so intensely, tenderly, and unsuspiciously. Altenberg was one of the few persons whom he trusted completely and considered naive, guileless, and harmless. He was willing, therefore, to forgive Altenberg even for his mercenary attitude, which made Kraus reject so many others.

> ...Dieses Künstlerleben hatte einen Zug, den in seiner Welt die Weiber verloren haben: Treue im Unbestand, rücksichtslose Selbstbewahrung in Wegwurf, Unverkäuflichkeit in der Prostitution ...[3]

Without ever indicating why, Kraus called Altenberg's work:

> ... das unsterbliche Werk der reichsten dichterischen Natur des neuen Deutschland ...[4]

Altenberg could even say (about a girl) what Kraus would think was blasphemy if it had come from anybody else's pen:

> Und wie sie deutsch spricht! Alleredelste!! Goethe ist ein Tier gegen Dich ...

And Kraus commented:

> Goethe war einverstanden ... Gott selbst stimmte zu. Und wenn sich die lebende deutsche Literatur von der Kraft dieses Augenblicks bedienen könnte, so würden Werke hervorkommen, die noch besser wären als das Deutsch der kleinen Tänzerin. Aber da sie alle als Bettler neben diesem Bettler stehen, der durch all zeitliche Erniedrigungen aufsteigen wird in das Reich des Geistes und der Gnade, so ist jedes Tier ein Goethe gegen sie.[5]

Karl Kraus's relationship to Peter Altenberg was unique among all of his human relationships: it was somewhat that of a father and son, not only in the sense that Kraus was the more mature and wordly-wise, but also because Altenberg was essentially a poet, and Kraus was a satirist. Like a child, and unlike a satirist, a poet lives and acts un-

[1] The man without pathos who supplies to the snob that which is suitable for him... *Ibid.*, 827–33 (Anfang Februar 1930), 93.

[2] *Literatur und Lüge.* p. 83.

[3] ... this embodiment of an artist's life had a trait which the women of his world have lost: fidelity in instability, absolute self-preservation in self-rejection, integrity in prostitution ... *Die Chinesische Mauer*, p. 291.

[4] ... the immortal work of the richest poetic soul of modern Germany ... *Die Fackel*, 800–5 (Anfang Februar, 1929), 51.

[5] And how she speaks German! The finest one! Goethe is a beast in comparison with you ... Goethe concurred ... God himself agreed. And if living German literature could make use of the power of this moment, works would result which are even better than the little dancer's German. But since they all stand as beggars next to this beggar who will rise to the kingdom of the spirit and of mercy through all temporal humilitations, every beast is a Goethe in comparison with them. *Ibid.*, 508–13 (Mitte April 1919), 8.

consciously. Kraus published Altenberg's first sketch and gave his first book to the publisher, Fischer.

Some of Kraus's remarks about Altenberg might, at first sight, seems slighting. The view expressed there detracts, however, in no way from Kraus's great love for him. Kraus expressed this love most clearly at Altenberg's grave, again saying that all were beggars compared with him. The literature which he wrote was only a fragment of his deep, passionate, humorous, emotional personality. He was the fool who gave us the norms, because he was both what is good and what is bad in nature. Altenberg was misunderstood because he was so far ahead of us. He suffered, saw the world as God did, and yet was a child, a moving clown who worshipped children, servant girls, and animals.[1] What Kraus appreciated about him especially was his lack of the accepted standards of morality and his entire lack, it seemed, of intentions of any kind. Kraus ended with the quotation from *Goetz von Berlichingen:*

Edler Mann! Edler Mann! Wehe dem Jahrhundert, das Dich von sich stiess! Wehe der Nachkommenschaft,die Dich verkennt.[2]

... Wenn ich Peter Altenberg nicht ohnedies schätzte, wäre er mir schon als Vogelscheuche für jene Philister willkommen...[3]

It is therefore plausible that no episode in Kraus's battle with Békessy angered him as much as the realization that his enemies had smeared that friendship with Altenberg by claiming that "not even Altenberg" had actually been his friend. Kraus compared that most precious human being, Altenberg, with the lowest, Békessy, starting from their common fault, which, however, seemed charming in the former, the fact that both gladly accepted money. Then Kraus entirely abandoned his polemic of the moment in order to extol Altenberg's childlike innocence, unbribality, and utter inability to keep from expressing what he felt on the spur of the moment. Kraus called him "den Reinsten, der je den Umgang des Schmutzes erduldet hat ..."[4]

Nestroy. Kraus did not consider valid the traditional objections to Johann Nestroy. To him it was not a fault that Nestroy borrowed many of his motifs and often wrote with an eye to pleasing the public – realizing, for example, that audiences want a happy ending, he used

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 8ff.

[2] Noble man! Noble man! Woe to the century which rejected you! Woe to the posterity which misunderstands you. *Ibid.*, 508–13 (Mitte April 1919), 10.

[3] ... If I didn't value Peter Altenberg anyway, he would still be welcome to me as a scarecrow against those philistines ... *Ibid.*, 82 (Anfang Oktober 1901), 28.

[4] "The purest who has ever suffered from contact with this filth ..." *Ibid.*, 712–16 (Ende Januar 1926), 59.

what Kraus called a purely outward pattern. On the other hand, Kraus accused the literary historians of overlooking the strong theatrical effect brought about by Nestroy's amazingly inpromptu writing or the philosophy of life expressed in the incidental music. Nestroy's field was wit, which on the stage had to be expressed by the humor inherent in language. In Kraus's own disorganized time, however, he felt that Nestroy would, like himself, have chosen as his medium the forms of the aphorism and the gloss.

Nestroy's people stood with one foot in their profession and with the other in Nestroy's own philosophy. They were mainly thinkers and speakers, but their personalities were very plastic, humorous, and full of tension and movement, especially considering that both they and the atmosphere surrounding them were created with astonishingly few words. Whereas Nestroy's plays would be amply justified by their entertaining qualities, the real Nestroy was one of thought. His greatest achievement was that of teaching naturally, plausibly and in easily understood language what no rationalistic, psychological, or naturalistic drama could teach: knowledge of the human soul.

In addition to Altenberg, Nestroy was the only Austrian whom Kraus recognized as a spiritual brother. Kraus appreciated his eloquence and the wide scope he gave truly great actors. In that respect Nestroy was to Kraus comparable to Shakespeare, although on a smaller scale. If his plays lacked the heroic qualities of Shakespeare's dramas, in performance at least they made up for this deficiency by being true stage rather than thought plays.[1] Nestroy assumed gigantic proportions, being, in Kraus's opinion, the greatest lyric philosopher the Germans had ever had, "... der Monologist der Menschheit, ... der Coupletsänger des Kosmos ..." [2]

Wedekinds and Kraus's similarity to Nestroy. Kraus believed that he and Wedekind [3] were true successors of Nestroy. What they had in common was their conception of lyricism with its necessary counterpart, satire. Kraus believed that by using mainly shades of voice modulation, all three revealed the beautiful by working on the ugly just as an acid, in itself disagreeable, may work on ugly rust in order to reveal clean, shiny metal.

Their common ground with the true lyricist lay in the fact that they did not engage in worthless admiration of what was, or in depreciation

[1] Schaukal, pp. 61–62.

[2] Mankind's monologist, the cosmic singer of couplets ... *Die Fackel*, 345–46 (31. März 1912), 40.

[3] *Untergang*, p. 248.

of the truly beautiful, as did Heine and Shaw, but while desiring beauty, they were also aware of ugly possibilities or realities. The works of all three consisted of polar currents streaming through each other.

Speaking of Nestroy but also meaning himself and to a lesser extent Wedekind, Kraus said that the lack of a firm, absolute system made it possible to be extremely flexible and Jean-Paulesque in their liquidness of style and freedom from conventional phrases. Kraus believed that both he and Nestroy could destroy the bourgeois phraseology merely by using it in their own way. Kraus felt that Nestroy achieved that end, for example, when he had one of his characters say that it was his duty, after sharing someone's misery, not to desert him in his good days. Again aiming at higher class language, Nestroy used the imperfect which sounded stilted in Austria: "wie dir der Schnabel wuchs." [1]

Kraus claimed, and no doubt rightly, that Nestroy had been greatly harmed by those who dispensed with him by labeling him a "dialect poet." Unlike that of Anzengruber, however, Nestroy's attraction was deeper than mere appeal to local patriots, fond of their own childhood dialect. His dialect was not a crutch but an integral part of his works. To the literary historians Nestroy was, generally speaking, "out of date." They said that, Kraus claimed, because they saw neither the timelessness nor the deep moral earnestness underlying what they considered his petty and ephemeral topics. Their own stuffiness prevented them from seeing Nestroy's humor. Kraus particularly resented Hebbel's attitude, saying that anyone who loved Heine and hated Jean Paul could not understand Nestroy.

Nestroy and Hebbel. Kraus demonstrated his view of drama most clearly with the example of Nestroy and Hebbel. Contrary to the generally accepted opinion, Kraus believed Nestroy to be by far the greater dramatist. This opinion rested on the conviction that drama was more a matter of language than of psychology. Engaging in long intellectual discussions about theoretical problems, Hebbel's people were not alive but only disturbed the audiences by making them intensely aware of the author's theories. To make matters worse, they presented these theories with divided roles, thus dividing spirit. Even such a character as *Holofernes* was, therefore, basically a bourgeois like Hebbel himself. Nestroy's people, on the other hand, were less intellectual, but they lived within language. Hebbel's plays were analytic, whereas Nestroy's were synthetic:

[1] Untranslatable, part of idiomatic expression meaning: speak naturally. Joh. Nestroy, *Das Notwendige und das Überflüssige* (The Necessary and the Superfluous) (Wien, 1920), p. 44.

Wissenschaft ist Spektralanalyse. Kunst ist Lichtsynthese. Der Gedanke ist in der Welt, aber man hat ihn nicht. Er ist durch das Prisma stofflichen Erlebens in Sprachelemente zerstreut: der Künstler schliesst sie zum Gedanken.[1]

Nestroy's politics. Kraus also felt linked to Nestroy by the similarity of their political views. He pointed to Nestroy as a satirist of high quality who still was far from sharing any of the tenets praised by the modern liberal press. Although neither adhered to a special political system, both felt satisfied merely to express political views which, as Kraus proudly claimed, were not based on social or political scientific theory but represented the simple truth as it comes out of the mouths of unspoiled and untwisted wise men.

Identifying himself thus with Nestroy, Kraus was very much worried lest at the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Nestroy's death the liberals might claim him as their own. Kraus pointed out proudly that those who accused Nestroy of being "im Vormärz stecken geblieben" (stuck in the days before 1830) were right, as Nestroy had always opposed freedom of speech,[2] liberalism, and being a thinker and not a democrat[3] had, in fact, scarcely any political convictions in the proper sense.[4] He simply divided people according to their social status; even from the stall of a spicedealer, Nestroy and his characters were able to know and understand mankind, whereas such people as Heine started out from the universe and had a horizon which ended in the pettiness of everyday life.[5]

Goethe. If Kraus loved such poets as Altenberg and Nestroy, perhaps to an extent unusual in a man whose attitude was in general so negative, it seems that the word "reverence" is too weak to express what he felt for Goethe. He deified him, frequently speaking of him as a god:

Feuersäule meines Danks an Gott und Goethe ...[6]

Ich aber sage euch: Nur wer goetheisch denkt, darf Goethe zitieren. Denn es steht geschrieben: du sollst den Namen Goethes nicht eitel nennen.[7]

Kraus saw in him the all-around human being, the complete personality, so all-embracing that from his height he could be seen by every-

[1] Science is spectral analysis. Art is the analysis of light. Thought is in the world, but one doesn't have it. It is scattered by the prism of subject-matter-experience into linguistic elements: the artist reunites them into thought. *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 83.

[2] *Die Fackel*, 345–46 (31. März 1905), 40ff.

[3] *Die Fackel*, 368–69 (5. Februar 1913), 5.

[4] "Nestroy und die Nachwelt," *Die Fackel*, 349–50 (13. Mai 1912), 17.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[6] Fiery column of my thanks to God and to Goethe ... *Worte in Versen*, IV, 15.

[7] But verily I say unto you: only he who thinks like Goethe may quote him. For it is written: thou shalt not take the name of Goethe in vain! *Die Fackel*, 178 (25 März 1905) 4.

one. He saw, first of all, the ceaselessly active man who for ages to come left an indelible impression on the world, finding his fullest expression not in fleeing from life, but in living in its midst and consciously enriching it.[1]

With regard to Goethe's poetic works, Kraus concentrated his attention on what might be considered an unusual selection. While almost ignoring the rest of his works, he praised and frequently recited *Pandora* and the second part of *Faust*. This is especially strange, considering that Kraus never felt very close to any other poetry which in philosophic emphasis would have been comparable to these two works. Even in Germany, *Pandora* was not very popular and Kraus took this as an indication of the low ebb of German culture. He believed it to be Goethe's loftiest and most difficult work, but its miraculous language was scarcely known in Germany, not even by a thousand of the "elektrisch installierten Höhlenbewohner." [2] For profit they pretended to appreciate Goethe, but had actually acquired of all of Goethe nothing but an intimate knowledge of their own abominable "Wanderer's Nachtlied" (Wanderer's Night Song) parodies and a certain quotation from *Goetz von Berlichingen*. In an era when the outhouse wall was the arena for all political and erotic desires, Kraus suggested that Goethe would have written nothing for the Germans but that one most easily understandable quotation.[3]

Kraus was not blind to Goethe's faults. He definitely disliked his submissive attitude toward the wordly potentates of his time and was particularly aroused when Goethe was able to repress his imagination sufficiently to write poetry for Emperor Franz, "the vicious longhead with the Habsburg lip." On the other hand, however, Kraus understood that Goethe's positive attitude toward rulers could be traced to his fortunate experiences with Karl August.[4] Neither was Kraus blind to the inequality of some of Goethe's poetic works:

> ... Sicherlich bleibt es eine der beklagenswertesten Folgen der französischen Revolution, dass die Lustspiele *Der Bürgergeneral* und *Die Aufgeregten* entstanden sind ...[5]

This sharp criticism is new evidence of a striking trait of Kraus's: his

[1] *Ibid.*, 15 (Ende August 1899), 15.
[2] Cave dwellers with electrical appliances, i.e. people with the moral principles of cave men.
[3] *Die Fackel*, 868–72 (März 1932), 5.
[4] *Ibid.*, 583–87 (Dezember 1921) 29f.
[5] It certainly remains one of the most deplorable consequences of the French revolution that the comedy *The Citizen General* and *The Excited Ones* were written. *Ibid.*, 649–56 (Juni 1924) 55.

ability to criticize almost ruthlessly some aspects of those whom he generally greatly admired.

Schiller. Although Schiller did not mean very much to Kraus, it angered him to think of such men as the Professor of Literature Jakob Minor saying of Schiller: "denn er war unser,"[1] on the occasion of the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of Schiller's birthday. Kraus declared that Minor and most of the so-called educated public did not know the "true Schiller."[2]

They knew him only through the subject matter with which he dealt and because that subject matter was common to all they believed themselves to be related to him. It was, Kraus admitted, extremely difficult to penetrate to the core of Schiller through all the sentimental banality surrounding him. It took superhuman justice, therefore, to see that Schiller was greater than his reputation. To make his greatness visible, one could only fight against his following and see to it that "Men's glee clubs" would no longer sing before his busts. To Kraus, however, it remained an insoluble problem why those who, in his opinion, did not understand great men still worshipped them, rather than inferior writers who, in his view, should have meant just as much to them. Why Schiller and not Wildenbruch? What they appreciated about Schiller died as platitudes long ago if it was not born so. The Schiller whom Kraus wanted the world to know was a rebel, against convention at any rate:

> ... Wenn nur erst Schiller als Ofenschmuck des deutschen Heims entfernt ist, kann er noch als Revolutionär in das deutsche Heim zurückkehren und die züchtige Hausfrau, die drinnen waltet, zum Erröten bringen, ja selbst Laura am Klavier an die Tage erinnern, da er noch die Brüste des Weibes "Halbkugeln einer bessern Welt" genannt hat. Damals nämlich, als noch in keinem Haushalt der Zitrone saftiger Kern zu populär-philosophischen Vergleichen gepresst wurde: da noch nicht des Zuckers lindernder Saft die herbe Kraft des Dichters zähmte, noch nicht des Wassers sprudelnder Schwall seinem Temperament sich vermischt hatte, ... O, damals lohte noch ein Moralhohn und tobte so laut, dass er heute selbst die Feiertagsglocke übertönen könnte, dass er die ministeriellen Redner verstummen, die Säkularfresser sich erbrechen und alle jene sich bekreuzigen liesse, die im überkommenden Glauben ihr "denn er war unser" beten.[3]

[1] For he was ours.

[2] *Ibid.*, 291 (30 November 1909) 23ff.

[3] Once Schiller has been removed from the fireplaces of German homes as a decoration, he can still return as a revolutionary and make the proper housewife who busies herself there blush; indeed, he may still remind Laura at the piano of the days when he called the breasts of a woman "hemispheres of a better world." At that time namely, when the "juicy heart of the lemon" was not yet pressed for philosophic comparisons; when the sugar's soothing juice did not yet tame the poet's austere force, when the water's effervescent surging had not yet mingled with his temperament, ... oh, at that time moral derision still burned and raged so loudly that it could even drown out today's holiday bell, that it could silence the ministerial speakers, make the beneficiaries of the anniversary sick to their stomachs and bring about

Kraus also defended Schiller, the moralist, against Nietzsche's ridicule.[1] Whereas Nietzsche, according to Kraus, had sunk by tragic suffering to the point of considering all morality relative and had thus given all impudent nobodies a "moral" justification, Kraus wanted Schiller's principle of absolute humanity, which was also his own, to survive as an ideal, no matter what became of his reputation as an artist. Considering Kraus's horror of stylized phrases, it is very plausible that he condemned qua moralizing as well as qua literature the later Schiller's moralistic preaching – although he himself frequently engaged in it.

Those who still admired Schiller, Kraus insisted, were the mediocre people who were satisfied to see that "*leben*" (live) and "*streben*" (strive) rhymed. Progress to them was merely changed decoration. They could be classifiable as members of clubs, germanists, or simply *Schöngeister* (beaux esprits), all of whom were most repulsive to Kraus and opposed to the freedom for which Schiller stood.

Wedekind. Although in general Kraus rejected plays, such as Ibsen's, dealing with social problems, he greatly favored Wedekind's treatment of woman in society as portrayed in the plays, *Die Büchse der Pandora* and *Erdgeist.*[2] That favorable attitude, it seems, did not stem from the genuine conviction that, as with Wedekind, art was dominant, and not social problems. It came rather from a belief that, considering how much of literature "da am Weibe schmarotzt," [3] plays which counteracted that, to his notion, distorted popular view were necessary.

Although Kraus usually distinguished, therefore, between "thought plays" which should be read and "action plays" for the stage, he greatly approved of the performance of Wedekind's plays, even helping to bring about some of them.

Brecht. Another dramatist of whom Kraus thought very favorably was Bert Brecht. Although he considered him more genuine than most contemporary German writers, however, he felt that the poetic qualities of Brecht's work were destroyed by too much emphasis on doctrines.[4]

Bahr. It is hard to say which among the writers of Kraus's time was the most constant target of his attacks. During the first few years of

that all those would make the sign of the cross who piously claim that he was one of their own. *Ibid.*, 291 (30 November 1909), 27f.

[1] *Ibid.*, 700–5 (Oktober 1925), 116.

[2] The Box of Pandora and Earth spirit.

[3] *Literatur und Lüge*, p. 8. "Is a parasite of woman."

[4] For an attempt to evaluate the great influence Karl Kraus had on Brecht, see Sternbach-Gärtner: *Bertolt Brecht und Karl Kraus in Neue Deutsche Literatur.* H. 10. Aufbau-Verlag Berlin, 1956. *Die Fackel*, 868–72 (März 1932), 36.

Die Fackel, however, it was, no doubt, Hermann Bahr. Kraus believed that, in order to destroy the prestige of the most important literary clique in Vienna, it was of supreme importance to expose as a worthless charlatan its leader, Bahr. Bahr was especially valuable to the group because he was a gentile and because, in the opinion of Kraus, he was really talented and therefore equipped for his activities "destructive of the last remnants of Austrian literature." [1] Kraus even published a list of quotations by famous contemporaries who despised Bahr, perhaps the strongest being one from Marie Ebner v. Eschenbach, who wrote simply: "Ich bin in Ehren grau geworden." [2]

Other very much disliked authors. When dealing with contemporary writers, Kraus rarely went above the level of satire. His satire was at times clever, even brilliant, but could not be literary criticism at the same time. The following illustrates how he pleased by the clever manipulation of words with highly emotive connotations and thus let one forget his failure to substantiate his charges or to point out concretely and systematically the weaknesses of a writer as a writer of literature.

Ich leugne nicht, dass Herr Salten ein geschickter Mann ist. Er kann launig sein und er kann auf Verlangen auch tief sein, kann den Ton der Klabriaspartie und, wie er's neulich in einer ganz ungewöhnlich zotigen Novelle tat, den Ton der Renaissance treffen; er kann empfindsam sein und Herrn Herzl, der ja auch Redakteur der *Neuen Freien Presse* ist, zuliebe den tausendjährigen Schmerz des Judentums für ein zionistisches Wochenblatt übernehmen. Herr Salten kann manches, aber er *ist* nichts... [3]

This is, no doubt, successful satire, but one cannot discuss Kraus as a satirist apart from the moral implications of his work, also because he himself emphasized ethics to such a great extent. His satire was often large-scale slander, applicable to almost all the notables of his time:

Herr Otto Julius Bierbaum, der von den Abfällen Liliencron'scher Poesie Gemästete ... [4]

... Herr Felix Salten, der bekannte Auslagenarrangeur von psychologischen Betrachtungen ... [5]

[1] *Ibid.*, 69 (Ende Februar 1901), 6.

[2] My hair has turned gray, and I have lived honorably. *Ibid.*, 68 (Mitte Februar 1901), 17.

[3] I do not deny that Mr. Salten is a clever man. He can be playful, and on occasion he can also be deep; he can find the exact tone of a card party and, as he did recently in a quite extraordinarily pornographic *novella* (the tone) of the Renaissance; he knows how to be sensitive, and will for the sake of Mr. Herzl, who indeed is also an editor of the *Neue Freie Presse*, also take over the thousand-year-old sufferings of Jewry for a Zionist weekly. Mr. Salten *knows how* to do many things, but he *is* nothing ... *Ibid.*, 86 (Mitte November 1901), 23.

[4] Mr. Otto Julius Bierbaum, who was fattened on the waste from Liliencrons poetry. *Ibid.*, 129 (Anfang Februar 1903), 13.

[5] ... Mr. Felix Salten, the well-known window-dresser of psychological observations... *Ibid.*, p. 16.

... Wilbrandt's Burgtheatererinnerungen, ... sind nicht höher denn als historisch sublimierter Kulissentratsch zu werten ...[1]

Only a thorough acquaintance with Kraus's work can make one believe Kraus could agree with Richard Wagner that unfair criticisms of artists should be subject to punishment [2] and yet feel innocent at the same time.

Heine. Elsewhere we have dealt with Kraus's dislike of Heine whom he believed to have founded the language of German journalism.[3] As for Heine, the poet, he suggested that his general popularity was due to his "tränenvolle Stofflichkeit" (tearful preponderance of subject matter) and to his having been the "Jugendliebe" (favorite of their youth) of so many people who cherished him later on as a reminder of their youth. If so many of his poems were set to music, it was merely due to their lack of lyric quality. Great lyric poetry, Kraus insisted, did not need the accompaniment of music:

... Die Singbarkeit eines Gedichtes war stets ein Verdachtgrund gegen seine Bedeutung als lyrisches Kunstwerk.[4]

Whereas Goethe and Liliencron looked at nature and were lyric poets, Heine had nature look at himself and produced "Operettenlyrik" (lyric poems suitable as lyrics for operettas). His "kleine Lieder" (little songs) were not necessary expressions but ornaments of his great pains and thus perhaps at best suitable as texts for Offenbach's operettas. Kraus objected further to Heine's frequent references to food and even to his coarser satirizing of the sex lives and poverty of his opponents. He disliked "Heine ... als prompten Bekleider vorhandener Stimmungen, ..."[5] as much as he did his bad taste revealed in his irreverent attitude toward Goethe and his mercenary spirit displayed in letters to his uncle and to the Rothschilds.[6] Yet Heine had merely started the avalanche rolling. Kraus said that Heine, like Platen, "war ein Talent weil kein Charakter." [7] Kraus believed that, while Heine still had certain standards of taste, his "epigones" made German literature into a market place for impressions, feelings, and opinions.

[1] ... Mr. Wilbrandt's memoirs of the Burgtheater ... are to be valued no more highly than historically sublimated stage gossip ... *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[2] *Ibid.*, 40 (Anfang Mai 1900), 31.

[3] *Ibid.*, 329–30 (31 August 1911), 1ff.

[4] ... the singability of a poem is always ground for suspicion about its significance as a lyrical work of art. *Ibid.*, 199 (23. März 1906), 2.

[5] Heine ... as the facile clothier of existing moods ... *Ibid.*, 329–30 (31. August 1911), 19.

[6] *Ibid.*, 406–12 (Oktober 1915), 52ff.

[7] Was a talent because not a character (allusion to the Heine-Platen controversy).

It seems that Kraus could not understand Heine because, while he himself said the least significant things very seriously, Heine expressed his deepest emotions with a slighting, ironic smile. Kraus spoke scornfully of this mixture of *Witz und Weh* (wit and woe), which, he said, appealed to the German taste and was strong enough neither for crying nor for laughing.

If, in Kraus's opinion, Heine expressed in many words what could have been said in few, it was because Kraus was unable to understand the variety of moods which lay between these words. Heine seemed trite to him, and he would probably have seemed trite to Heine.

Perhaps Kraus sensed that there were many bases of comparison between him and Heine and without realizing it may have tried to justify his own failings by deprecating Heine. Heine's peripheral position as a Jew was not unlike Kraus's own. However, if both were critical of the Jews, it seems that Heine arrived at a more cosmopolitan standpoint than Kraus, thus being able to satirize his Jewish and gentile fellows more equally, without being emotionally much more involved with one group than with the other. In view of this difference, Kraus's claim that Liliencron was more cosmopolitan in Schleswig-Holstein than Heine in the cosmos is interesting. Similarly, Kraus resented that Heine was revered as a fighter against the petty philistines and was perplexed by Nietzsche's identification of him with himself while Kraus, on the other hand, wanted to be considered a great ethical revolutionary, but gained much less recognition. If anything somewhat reconciled Kraus to Heine's great fame, it was to some extent his conviction that it would end as surely and completely as the "liberale Maul- und Klauenseuche . . ." [1]

Grillparzer. Kraus attributed the fame of Grillparzer almost entirely to the efforts of the Austrian journalists who had patriotically determined to make their local poet third after Goethe and Schiller.[2] Grillparzer, Kraus thought, was not even problematic like Hebbel but so empty that his dramas were not good material for acting. They certainly did not succeed in making Greece live for the Viennese. His lyric verses lacked strength as well as originality, and their language, although fairly good, was traditional. Although personally refined, dignified, and educated, Grillparzer was essentially a Caspar Milquetoast who dreamed about colorful countries but whose ideal was "inner

[1] Liberal hoof and mouth disease . . . *Ibid.*, 374–75 (8 Mai 1913), 14.
[2] *Die Fackel*, 588–94 (März 1922), 12.

peace" which, as he told the Austrians, they could best achieve at home. Thus, Grillparzer was a poet whose horizon was that of an observer standing on the Kahlenberg, a hill near Vienna. Although the naive reader sensed this, the literary historians continued to extol Grillparzer:

> ... Eine Literaturkritik, die die Kraft nach dem Stoff und das Wesen nach der Form wertet, wird füglich Raimund, der der echtere Dichter war, um der volkstümlichen Färbung willen hinter den Bildungsdichter stellen und ahnt vollends nicht, dass Nestroy, an dessen Gebiet aussen weder des Meeres noch der Liebe Wellen anschlagen, in jeder Zeile mehr Lyriker, Dramatiker und Epigrammatiker war als der ganze Grillparzer.[1]

Kraus respected Grillparzer, nevertheless, because he wrote a poem against the press and avoided publicity in sharp contrast to such present-day classics as Thomas Mann who wrote for the *Neue Freie Presse* and interested the public in themselves by telling of their writing habits. To be sure, by merely mentioning "a poem against the press," Kraus told nothing of its literary merits, and as for the derogatory remark about Thomas Mann, literary scholarship is very grateful to him and others for the insight they afforded into artistic creation.

Harden. There was a time when Kraus was on very good terms with Maximilian Harden.[2] It even seems that to the young Kraus, Harden was a model, or at any rate more of one than anyone else. In the first few years of *Die Fackel,* Kraus thought of Harden as a worker of the spirit who had the courage to say everything although he was imprisoned in a fortress for joking about the German emperor. A few years later, when Kraus dealt with the topic of *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität,* he took Harden as his authority when combating the "*Lex Heinze.*" [3] Before *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität* was published, however, Kraus had acquired a violent dislike for him.

The immediate cause for Kraus's changed attitude was Harden's view on sex, as revealed in the Moltke-Eulenberg homosexuality

[1] ... the kind of literary criticism which evaluates strength on the basis of subject matter, and essence on the basis of form will, of course, like Raimund who was a more genuine poet less than the Bildungsdichter (synthetic poet), and moreover has no idea that Nestroy whose territory is affected from the outside neither by the waves of the sea nor by those of love, (an allusion to Grillparzer's play *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*) is in his every line more of a lyric poet, as well as more of a dramatist and writer of epigrams than Grillparzer in all of his work. Cf. p. 63. (The Waves of the Sea and of Love).

[2] *Ibid.*, 2 (Mitte April 1899), 1ff.

[3] "Lex Heinze" is the supplementary law of June 25, 1900, which was passed at the time of the suit against the procurer Heinze, enlarging and supplementing the penal regulations regarding vice (*Sittlichkeitsverbrechen*), i.e. procuring, paragraph 18, 1a St. G. B. The lively public campaign against the paragraphs regarding art and theater resulted in the prohibition of the sale of pictures "offending one's sense of shame" to persons under 16 years under paragraph 184 of the government law book.

scandal and in Harden's gossipy comments about an actress. It seems that Kraus wanted to take violent revenge on him in order to make up for his former admiration. In 1907, Kraus wrote a *Fackel* dedicated entirely to the destruction of Harden's reputation.[1]

In this book of varied accusations, Harden was called a cheat who claimed to have heard many things from his alleged friend Bismarck which the latter had never said. Harden was entirely ignorant of human nature and betrayed language and good taste. Although basically empty, he was conceited and tried to give the impression of being profound. After that introduction Kraus launched his main attack, that against Harden's "operation in the lower abdomen." He did not, like Harden's followers, shrug his shoulders, minimizing the importance of a little more gossip about sex, but rather considered what he called indencency coupled with stupidity far too dangerous in as dexterous, industrious and ambitious a person as Harden. Moreover, German legislation did not punish gossip which could not be proved untrue. Harden's style was so overfilled with literary allusions as to give him prestige with the most influential readers and even with writers. In Kraus's opinion, Harden was completely lacking in subtlety and was, therefore, only able to have superficial opinions but not to evaluate. He wrote about so many topics, nevertheless, Kraus claimed, that it was impossible for all of them to be close to a man's heart, and that Harden, a common blackmailer, told of scandals for very questionable reasons. Kraus apparently forgot that the same accusations could also be made against him. He seemed satisfied to have revealed the would-be Faust as a Wagner in what Scheu called:

> ... dieser elementaren, furiosen, niederschmetternden Abrechnung, diesem schnaubenden "esse delendum" ... Es war grausig schön. Harden erwachte eines Morgens und war unberühmt ... wie bei einem Dynamitattentat, restlos dahin ...[2]

Although Kraus believed he had destroyed Harden after the Eulenberg affair, and Scheu agreed with him, Kraus continued to attack Harden steadily although to a decreasing extent almost to the end of Harden's life.[3] Most plausible of Kraus's many objections to Harden was that against his style. In fact, if it is difficult to understand how German readers could have been willing to plough through Harden's

[1] *Maximilian Harden, Ein Nachruf*, 1918.

[2] ... this elementary, furious, shattering settling of accounts, this raging *esse delendum* ... It was horribly beautiful. One morning Harden woke up and was fameless ... as after a dynamite attack, completely gone ... Scheu, p. 31.

[3] *Die Fackel*, 601–7 (November 1922), 41ff.

unnecessarily difficult style, irrelevantly filled with the most far-fetched literary allusions, it is even more incomprehensible how Kraus, being as conscious as he was of language, could respect Harden as long as he did. Kraus saw in this style an additional reason for suspecting the genuineness of the man. Harden was clearly making more of himself than he was.

Kraus's translations from Harden's "Desperanto" became a periodically appearing feature of *Die Fackel.*[1] At his best when obviously enjoying himself, Kraus quoted Juvenal's *Difficile est satiram non scribere* [2] and explained, tongue in cheek, that he was translating Harden:

> ... mit Preisgabe des dichterischen Moments, das gerade für den politischen Leitartikel unentbehrlich ist, ... Der Kongress des von Bonaparte zerstückelten Europa: Der Wiener Kongress ... Das Ohr lässt von aussen her keine Schallwelle durch das ovale Fenster ins knöcherne Labyrinth ... Man hört nichts ...[3]

Hofmannsthal. Kraus most frequently satirized Hofmannsthal by visualizing him posing as another Goethe, preferable wearing a housecoat as had the old Goethe:

> Es steht nur Dem der Schlafrock wohl,
> Der einst den Harnisch getragen.[4]

During his more benevolent moments, he considered Hofmannsthal only a passable translator, an educated man capable of maintaining a certain artificial cultural level.[5] The following estimate, however, is more typical:

> ... der bekanntere zeitgenössische Umdichter Hofmannsthal, der ehrwürdigen Kadavern das Fell abzieht, um fragwürdige Leichen darin zu bestatten, ... Wie alle besseren Leser reduziert Herr Hofmannsthal das Werk auf den Stoff.[6]

If he once defended Hofmannsthal's *Der Tor und der Tod* against those who claimed that it was not true to life, he seems to have done so

[1] *Literatur und Lüge*, pp. 108ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 127ff.

[3] ... sacrificing the poetic factor which is essential for a political editorial, ... The Congress of Europe which had been dismembered by Bonaparte: the Congress of Vienna ... The ear admits no sound wave from the outside through the oval window into the bony labyrinth: one hears nothing ... *Literatur und Lüge*, pp. 87ff.

[4] A housecoat looks good only on one who once wore a harness. *Die Fackel*, 15 (Ende August 1899), 16.

[5] *Weltgericht*, I, 85.

[6] ... the better-known contemporary recaster of poetic works, Hofmannsthal, who skins venerable cadavers in order to bury venerable corpses in the skins ... as do all better-class readers, Mr. Hofmannsthal reduces works of art to the subject matter on which they are based. *Die Fackel*, 349–50 (13. Mai 1912), 7.

primarily in order to attack the naturalists rather than to show his approval of Hofmannsthal.

Rilke. Whereas Kraus heaped frequent ridicule on Hofmannsthal, he mentioned Rilke extremely rarely. When he did speak of him at length, he merely ridiculed the ultra-refined Rilke's willingness to have his poems appear side by side with those of Ginzkey, "der das Gluck-Gluck im Sumpf erstickender Russen lyrisch verklärt hat." [1]

Ibsen. Ibsen's plays were very much in vogue at the time of the early numbers of *Die Fackel,* but Kraus was little concerned with them although he rather liked those plays not motivated by contemporary social criticism, especially the feminist movement, such as: *Der Kronprätendent* (The Pretender), *Brand, Kaiser und Galiläer* (Emperor and Galilean), *Frau Inge* (Lady Inger of Östraat), *Nordische Heerfahrt* (The Vikings of Helgoland), and perhaps best of all, *Peer Gynt.* Elsewhere, he believed, Ibsen was a "... Rationalist des Wunderbaren ..." [2] and tried to make a dramatic hocuspocus of that most sober thing in the world, social criticism.[3] Kraus objected most of all to his viewing woman as a moral-spiritual being who wished to shake off a doll's-role fate.[4] He disliked what he considered the transference of male characteristics to woman as much as he did Ibsen's frequent emphasis on the moral problems connected with virginity.[5]

Schnitzler. Although prejudiced against what he termed the undignified form of serialized newspaper novels, Kraus ironically granted Schnitzler the right to have his novels printed in that way: "Wissend, dass man überall anfangen kann, ohne etwas zu verlieren oder zu gewinnen ..." [6] For Kraus, this is an unusually unkind remark about Schnitzler. In general, Schnitzler was almost the only literary figure he mentioned fairly frequently in neither an extremely negative nor extremely positive way. Most important of all, Kraus was convinced of his integrity and independence of the literary cliques.[7] He believed that Schnitzler had delicate taste, a charming feuilletonistic spirit, and was not conceited. Kraus could, however, think of much more for the debit side of the ledger. Being psychologically shallow and limited

[1] who has glorified lyrically the gluck-gluck sound of Russians drowning in the swamps. *Ibid.*, 457–61 (10 Mai 1917), 23.

[2] Rationalist of that which inspires wonder. *Ibid.*, 205 (11. Juni 1906), 4.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Literatur und Lüge*, p. 231 cf. p. 173.

[5] *Die Fackel*, 205 (11. Juni 1906), 5.

[6] Knowing, that one can start anywhere without losing or gaining anything ... *Ibid.*, 374–75 (8. Mai 1913), 16.

[7] *Ibid.*, 133 (Mitte März 1903), 5.

by narrow bourgeois boundaries, Schnitzler merely depicted a certain not very high level of society in a somewhat stereotyped way, characteristic of "Süsswasserdichter" (sugar-water poets).[1] He was wrong in defending women who had made a "mistake," for Kraus did not consider it a mistake. Moreover, Schnitzler's style was "kurzatmig" (short of breath) as indicated by the many dashes avoided by "a writer of the high form of epigrams."

Finally, beside the infinitely many minor criticisms, there was a real difference in *Weltanschauung* between Kraus and Schnitzler. Schnitzler believed that man was only a toy of fate. What to him were threads of fate were to Kraus the strings with which we strangle ourselves. Kraus seems to have tolerated Schnitzler, who did not fight against the world, because he was convinced that Schnitzler was passive not through opportunism but through his deterministic convictions.

He reviewed Schnitzler's *Professor Bernhardi* at greater length, although he announced at the beginning of his article that Schnitzler would be forgotten in ten years.[2] Kraus viewed this play rather negatively since he disliked the type of a benevolent professor on principle. Such a long-bearded man was bound to encourage banality and hinder the spirit, for when outward forms took on such importance, actual essence was pushed into the background.

Salten. Kraus's dislike of Felix Salten rested largely on scepticism. Just as he doubted the sincerity of almost everybody's faith in any ideology, so also did he doubt Salten's faith in Zionism. "Salten," Kraus remarked, "dem es gegeben ist, zahlreiche Weltanschauungen gleichzeitig und konsequent zu vertreten . . ." [3] If, in *Bambi,* Salten displayed a great love for animals, Kraus assumed that that was a pretense, motivated by the desire for making money. It was almost as if Kraus did not want to share with another his own professed trait of liking animals. Finally, Kraus who prided himself on dwelling largely on small matters was greatly angered by another small matter: On his fiftieth birthday, Mayor Seitz congratulated him profusely, but this was an honor which meant much less to him after he learned of Seitz's similar congratulations to Salten.[4]

Werfel. As we have seen, Werfel, one of Kraus's early protegés, became the target of his satire in *Literatur, oder man wird doch da sehn.*[5]

[1] *Literature und Lüge,* p. 183.
[2] *Die Fackel,* 368–69 (5. Februar 1913), 1.
[3] *Ibid.,* 811–19 (Anfang August 1929), 134. Salten who is able to defend numerous world views simultaneously and consistently.
[4] *Ibid.,* 820–26 (Ende Oktober 1929), 44f.
[5] Cf. Chap. 1, pp. 22f.

Ten years later Kraus spoke even more scornfully of Werfel. Suggesting that he should be chased from Mount Olympus with wet rags, he made him responsible for the affected popularity of such words as *Komplexe* (complexes), *Abreaktionen* (coolings off), *Sublimierungen* (sublimations), *Weltbeglückertum* (dogoodism), *Dynamik* (dynamics), *Esoterik* (esoteric), *Ballung* (bunching together), *Steilung* (steepening), *Stufung* (gradation) and others.[1] If one finds it hard to see justification for such an accusation, it is even harder to see the fair basis of Kraus's claim:

> ... Der noch entwicklungsfähige Herr Werfel hat unstreitlich das literaturgeschichtliche Verdienst, die Lyrik der mischpochalen [2] Dinge entdeckt zu haben; die Belletristik der Familienangelegenheiten ...[3]

Kerr. If in his attacks on those who had lent their pen to the war effort, Kraus concentrated especially on Alfred Kerr, it was not because Kerr deserved such criticism more than many others, but rather because Kerr lent himself better as an object of satire. He was a type, the German-Jewish *Literat* that could easily seem funny to his Viennese colleague. Many unrelated artificialities could be pointed out about Kerr and utilized in any attack on him. Kerr's having changed his name was to Kraus a sign of insecurity and hence vulnerability. In addition, Kerr had acquired certain peculiarities of style and language, such as many unnecessary dots and dashes, which to Kraus were merely signs of affectation. Then again, a long beard, no longer fashionable in the twenties, surrounded his strikingly small mouth. The main cause for Kraus's tirades against Kerr, including one of the longest *Fackeln* ever written, was the very warlike, inhuman attitude revealed in Kerr's war poetry, together with his denunciation of Kraus as a traitor to the fatherland.[4]

The feud raged for years and seems to have ended with a complete moral victory for Kraus. His main weapon was the documentary evidence of Kerr's war poems which had been published by Scherl together with other equally blood-thirsty poems under the collective name, "Gottlieb." This evidence was reinforced by the fact of Kerr's willingness to turn with the tide and be an ambassador of peace to the peoples which he had cursed. Since Kerr was unable to disprove that,

[1] Rollett, p. 23.

[2] Mischpochal: a Jewish expression meaning "of the family" or "having to do with relatives."

[3] Mr. Werfel who is still capable of development has undoubtedly made the meritorious contribution to literary history of having discovered the lyric beauty of matters concerning Jewish relatives; the *belles lettres* of family affairs ... *Die Fackel*, 827–33 (Anfang Februar 1930), 99f.

[4] *Die Fackel*, 787–94 (September 1928).

as Kraus had claimed in public, he was a crook, his attempts at retaliation only placed him in a more incriminating light. Needless to say, he made himself ridiculous by quoting accusations against Kraus from avowedly antisemitic newspapers,[1] or by resorting to name-calling in a feud in which Kraus adhered strictly to more refined techniques. Thus Kraus merely reprinted a passage by Kerr under the title: *Der Polemist:*

Wenn ich diesen Burschen lese,
  Mahnt mich immer was an Käse.
. . . . . .
Wie er schweissverweslich duftet,
. . . . . .
  Täuschen ist sein Tagewerk.
Ehrenschänder, Schmähschriftschmierer,
  Aufgeblähter Jammerzwerg.
. . . . . .
Eine pathosmiese, fette,
  Krüppelkrumme, lügenlahme,
Kleine Querulantenklette
. . . . . .
Ein "gerechter" Lump.[2]

Kerr's replies died down as time went on. He no longer even reacted to Kraus's offer to leave him alone in return for twenty thousand marks' damages for disabled war veterans.

War poets. If Kraus turned more and more against Hauptmann, the author of two of Kraus's favorite works, *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* and *Die Weber*,[3] it was not only because of Hauptmann's war poetry but also because of his "conforming" and otherwise becoming one of the contemporary *Literaten.* To Kraus, this situation seemed to find visible expression when Hauptmann came to Vienna to lecture at an official reception to which Kraus had not been invited.[4] Hauptmann, "the

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 1ff.

[2] When I read this fellow / Something always reminds me of cheese / ... What a sweaty-decaying smell / ... To deceive is his day's work / Desecrator of honor, scribbler of abusive pamphlets / Blown-up miserable dwarf / ... An ugly, fat, crippled-crooked / lame-and-lying little burr full of pathos / ... a "just" scoundrel. *Ibid.*, 781–86 (Anfang Juni 1928), 29.

[3] *Hannele's Ascent to Heaven* and *The Weavers.*

[4] *Ibid.*, 583–87 (Dezember 1921), 1ff. Also *ibid.*, 457–61 (10. Mai 1917), 63. When reciting from *Hannele*, Kraus warned his audience not to confuse its author with the war poet of the same name. In clearly referring to Kraus's small stature and curved spine, Kerr was hitting below the belt.

simple poet from the *Riesengebirge,*" had also accepted honorary doctorates, Kraus remarked with a sarcasm which makes one wonder whether envy, too, did not prompt his scorn.

Kraus never tired of chastising in prose passages, poems, glosses, and satires those who had written war poetry. He seemed to care little how small were the reputations he was destroying and wrote one of his most remarkable satires, for instance, about the Viennese playwright, Hans Müller.[1] By 1932, he had not yet stopped reminding the generally anti-war writer Kurt Tucholsky that he had once endorsed war loans fifteen years earlier.[2] Kraus considered one's spiritual world a unit and was therefore convinced that nothing written by a former writer of war literature could be clean. Hence children's minds were being poisoned by exposure to even the most bucolic poems of Gintzkey and Kernstock.[3] He even suggested that, in order to destroy such writers' prestige, the Austrian government should have them brought before a tribunal.

Burgtheater. The contemporary low ebb of the theater, in Kraus's view, was largely due to the relativistic *Zeitgeist* which made true drama impossible and the heroic seem ridiculous. The same general negation of heroism which, in spite of the heroic sacrifices of individuals engaged in it, was evidenced especially throughout the First World War, could be seen in all phases of contemporary culture. Kraus knew that his own *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* could not be a great drama because it recreated an unheroic time. It was a time when nothing was considered absolutely great, when the voices most frequently heard translated every achievement into units of money, time and horse power. Kraus fought relativism in the name of the absolute value of man. Thence came his struggle against the trite stage productions which spoiled public taste, since, as he believed, material interest was the main determinant of the contemporary theater repertory.

To its original purposes, much of the theater added more and more side attractions until finally they seemed to dominate it. Thus, for instance, chorus girls came to play an important role as *Animiermädchen* (party girls), even according to the admission of theater managers.[4] The press, which could have helped remedy the situation merely chatted and supported illusions, profiting from the exploitation of potential actresses. Kraus, hurt most of all by his idealized *Burg-*

[1] "Hans Müller in Schönbrunn," *ibid.*, pp. 68ff.
[2] *Ibid.*, 868–72 (März 1932), 59ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, 588–94 (März 1922), 81ff.
[4] *Ibid.*, 20 (Mitte Oktober 1899), 2.

theater's falling into the same groove as the other theaters, repeated again and again:

... ich behaupte ... dass das Burgtheater nur Vergangenheit und keine Zukunft hat ...[1]

... die ganze Tragödie der Burgtheaterherrlichkeit, der ganze Dahingang einer edlen Bühnenkultur, der ganze Abstieg der Wiener Gesellschaft ...[2]

Deterioration of the theater. To determine the relative merits of the Viennese theater during Kraus's youth, as compared with those of a decade or two later, would exceed the limits of this study. The fact that the death of the actor Adolf Sonnenthal and Reinhardt's arrival in Vienna were almost coincidental seemed to Kraus to be symbolic of the decay of the theater.[3] One great personality on the stage had been exchanged for mass effects.

Der Zusammenbruch der Lebens- und Bühnenwerte vollzieht sich in dem Grinsen einer Generation, die zwischen Gott und dem Schauspieler alles zerzweifelt, was imstande war, ein schöneres Leben als das ihre auf die Beine zu stellen. Die Unfähigkeit zum Gefühl, die wirklich hofft, durch Autos weiter und durch Aeros höher zu kommen ...

... die Kultur des Theaters zeigt den Wärmegrad des Lebens an.[4]

Theater and modern political institutions. Kraus's critique of the theater as well as that of literature and art proceeded from cultural criteria.[5] Modern drama, an integral part of modern civilization, had declined with the rise of modern political and economic institutions. Not only had the stage been commercialized, but democracy and the leveling of art necessarily went together. At the time of absolutism, interest in the theater was heightened by political pressure. In the time of universal suffrage, theater gossip is all that is left after the destruction of a culture by political freedom.[6]

Naturalism. If Kraus, whose predilections converged in the age of classicism and romanticism, was opposed to naturalism, this was to

[1] I state ... that the Burgtheater has only a past, but no future ... *Ibid.*, 726–29 (Juni 1926), 36.

[2] ... the whole tragedy of the magnificence of the *Burgtheater*, the total death of a noble culture of the stage, the downfall of Viennese society ... *Untergang*, p. 385.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 379.

[4] The collapse of the values of life and of the stage is accompanied by the grinning of a generation which doubts to pieces everything that exists between God and the artist that had succeeded in creating a life more beautiful than theirs. Those incapable of feeling who really hope to go farther with cars, and higher with planes ... and the culture of the theater is the thermometer of life. *Ibid.*

[5] As we shall see, "cultural" definitely had a qualitative meaning to Kraus.

[6] *Die Fackel*, 349–5 (13. Mai 1912), 19.

some extent because he doubted the sincerity of the chief exponents of this literary trend. He believed that it had come about as the calculated result of the desire of Otto Brahm, the theater director, and others to gain prestige and money.[1] Chiefly, however, he rejected naturalism on aesthetic grounds. According to Kraus, training in naturalistic acting only spoiled actors for true drama. On the one hand, naturalistic theater including the use of dialect and of "real" stage decorations only served to hide the true mediocrity of the performance. On the other hand, the greatness of such a play as *Die Weber* was unjustly attributed to its naturalism. In Kraus's opinion, the naturalists avoided violent emotional outbursts because they were not capable of them.[2] Kraus's view may seem paradoxical at first: he felt that "naturalness" rather than traditioncal make-up or bare legs instead of tights for a dancer were absurd, and that realism on the stage would conflict with that very essence of the stage which presupposed much imagination on the part of the audience.[3] Even if one comes, however, to acquire some understanding for Kraus's point of view, one realizes that it is the inevitable fate of the satirist to say "no" overwhelmingly often, and remains sceptical about the soundness of a view arrived at not independently, but as part of a total rejection of everything that is not perfect. When he said "Früher waren die Dekorationen aus Pappe und die Schauspieler echt. Jetzt sind die Dekorationen über jeden Zweifel erhoben und die Schauspieler von Pappe," [4] he mainly meant to condemn naturalism although he did not so much point at faults in it as at the lack of modern man's individual stature. That fact, however, could hardly be changed by a theater director. It could merely be inadequately compensated for by emphasis on externals rather than on acting. Kraus continued to heap ridicule on modern stage directors and especially on Reinhardt whose elaborate artificiality could neither seem "natural" to audiences, nor be the expression of the "artist's" inner need. In such work he saw mere pretense and falsehood, which would inevitably contribute to such world disasters as the First World War and later another, much more horrible one.[5] To understand how Kraus could see such a connection it is necessary to remember his belief in the significance of language – to him the primary essence of

[1] *Ibid.*, 10 (Anfang Juli 1899), 16ff.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 17f.
[3] *Sprüche und Widersprüche*, pp. 137f.
[4] Formerly the decorations were made of cardboard and the actors were genuine. Now the decorations are real beyond any doubt, and the actors are made of cardboard. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
[5] *Die Fackel*, 601–7 (November 1922), 2.

literature – for life in all of its phases. To bring about a better future for the stage, he kept reminding his readers of the earlier and less realistic theater which, however, gave to a careful, well-considered language its rightful emphasis.

Expressionism. Although Kraus approved of certain individual members of some modern literary movements, he rejected all movements on principle. To him writing was a very individual matter concerning a man's conscience and his almost holy relationship with language. Therefore the attempt to fit such an activity into a necessarily limiting movement could never be acceptable to Kraus. During the war, to be sure, he fought with the young expressionistic writers against war and against the old-school patriotic writers, and his rejection of realism on the stage is certainly reminiscent of the expressionists, but what little solidarity there was lasted only a very short time. One can only conjecture why, in spite of his general view, he esteemed expressionists like Georg Trakl and Else Lasker-Schüler so highly, and to a lesser extent, and for a short time, also Albert Ehrenstein and Franz Werfel. Kraus believed that all writers deviating from what he considered the norm were clever businessmen or at least poseurs, at best no better than journalists in a different era.[1] For the most part Kraus ignored the expressionists except for an occasional humorous remark.

Absence of heroism. Such people as George Bernard Shaw made sure, in Kraus's opinion, that there was no longer any faith in heroism, that there was nothing left which could not be expressed in words. Shaw and all the other shallow ones penetrated all depths, and their conceit reached all heights. The plausible result of such attitudes and an eloquent document of the times was the cabaret which vegetated, "kunstlos, poesielos" (artless, without poetry).[2]

Relations of theater and press. In the early years of *Die Fackel,* Kraus was particularly interested in the corrupt relations between the theater and the press, including the vicious practice of distributing complimentary tickets and thus obliging critics to write favorable reviews. Theater policies, he believed, were guided by the taste or business interests of daily

[1] "... Expressionisten, Dadaisten und sonstige Existenzen, die den journalistischen Beruf verloren oder nur verfehlt haben..." (expressionists, dadaists and other questionable characters who have lost or merely missed the journalistic profession). *Ibid.*, 514–18 (Ende Juli 1919), 61. By what I call the norm he meant "Stil" in Goethe's sense, i.e. neither "einfache Nachahmung" nor "Manier."

[2] Erich Mühsam, "Das Kabarett," *Die Fackel*, 199 (23. März 1906), 20.

press advertisers.[1] The actors' club, "Concordia," [2] made the theaters so dependent on the press that theatrical performances usually corresponded exactly to the cheap and tasteless demands of the members of the stock exchange.

The "Concordia" was also, of course, a mutual aid society, whose members praised each other's works. Kraus had expressed his view as early as the first year of *Die Fackel* when a gang of hoodlums, who he believed had probably been hired by a theater-press clique, had inflicted rather serious physical injury on him:

> ... Sollte er (ein Ziegelstein) mir nächstens den Arm verstümmeln, so bleibt mir noch ein Mund "auszusprechen, was ist," laut zu sagen, dass die Versippung zwischen Theater und Presse bald zum Ruin beider Institutionen führen muss, ...[3]

Necessity for good plays being read and bad ones acted. The fact that Kraus was more of an actor than of a dramatist may help to explain his somewhat unusual view of drama. He believed that the actor was much more important on the stage than the play,[4] and because the actor should have a chance to express himself with as little interference as possible, inferior plays were actually preferable to good ones, which could be spoiled on the stage and should therefore only be read. Thus the writer of stage plays should do no more than furnish opportunities for acting. Because it did not allow serious reflection, the stage could only profane poetic thought and distract the mind. Hence, the poet could, at most, be useful to the theater by giving stage directions[5]:

> Aeschylus wird an dem Ausbreitungsbedürfnis des letzten Komödianten zuschanden, und die Andachtsübungen einer Wagneroper sind ein theatralischer Nonsens.[6]

On the other hand, Kraus stressed that good actors should be used for the production of mediocre or bad plays.[7] Goethe knew this, but best of all was the great satirist, Nestroy, who used indifferent French *Possen* and let his lights flare upon them, knowing that he should concentrate on the only aspects of the play which the audience could

[1] *Ibid.*, 20 (Mitte Oktober 1899), 2ff.

[2] An exclusive club for journalists and writers.

[3] ... If it (a brick) should cripple my arm next, I shall still have a mouth "to express what is," to say aloud that turning the relationship between theater and press into a family affair must soon lead to the ruin of both institutions ... *Ibid.*, 5 (Mitte Mai 1899), 3.

[4] *Sprüche und Widersprüche*, p. 139.

[5] *Nachts*, p. 52.

[6] Aeschylos is spoiled by the most mediocre comedian's need to "throw his weight around," and the exercises in worship of a Wagnerian opera are nonsense from the point of view of drama. *Die chinesische Mauer*, p. 22.

[7] *Literatur und Lüge*, p. 74.

see, namely the funny scenes, rather than the philosophic wit.[1] This was also the reason why the great actor, Alexander Girardi, always chose mediocre plays and did wonders with them. He would have been equally good had he made up his own texts impromptu. The truth of this, as well as Girardi's greatness, was conclusively proved by the actor's popularity, for according to Kraus, the theater was one art in which popular taste was the best judge.[2] One must understand this theory of Kraus's in order not to be surprised when, for instance, very much in contrast to his usual good taste, he praised what seems to be a mere sentimentality, the reading of Metella's letter in Offenbach's operetta, *Gaité Parisienne*, as one of the most effective incidents on the stage.[3]

Deterioration of acting. The constant deterioration during his own lifetime of the art of acting was to Kraus a development which was to be expected in an unheroic era. He respected only the pre-naturalistic old-school actors who still had a sense of the dramatic and were not merely part of the set. He spoke of Matkowski with the kind of admiration one feels for one's childhood stage heroes and contrasted Joseph Lewinsky with those modern actors whose professional dignity did not prevent their endorsing liquor and cosmetic advertisements.[4] Considering how reserved Kraus's praise usually was, his admiration for Sonnenthal was most striking:

> ... Ich habe den wahrsten Menschen kennen gelernt, und es war ein Schauspieler ... Adolf Ritter von Sonnenthals Briefwechsel ... Welch eine Dichtung aus Milde und Männlichkeit, Anmut und Adel, Güte und Grösse ...[5]

Kraus could not possibly have approved of any actor who had acquired what he considered Hollywood characteristics. He was therefore bound to resent Charlie Chaplin who had helped to create such characteristics by his example. Of the many well-known contemporary comic actors, Kraus seems to have liked only Girardi. He was, in Kraus's opinion, greater than the literature which he was accused of neglecting.[6]

The status of actors and actresses. It was generally accepted that the profession of acting was not a reputable one. This view was intensified, because it was well known that in order to gain favorable press criticism,

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[2] *Untergang*, p. 15.
[3] *Die Fackel*, 757–58 (April 1927), 47f.
[4] *Ibid.*, 726–29 (Juni 1926), 70ff.
[5] ... I have become acquainted with the truest human being, and he was an actor ... Adolf Knight von Sonnenthal's exchange of letters ... what a poetic work of gentleness and virility, charm and nobility, goodness and greatness ... *Untergang*, p. 378.
[6] *Die chinesische Mauer*, p. 211.

an actress had to be ready to render the press any desired services; the least of these services, demanded of actors and actresses, were free performances at the "Concordia." [1]

Kraus's protest against such coercion, however, did not imply that he favored the actor's fight for social rights and status. Since, in his opinion, actors had the psychological characteristics of women, they deserved no other social position than women. He accorded them very much the same place in society – that of passive givers of enjoyment, gallantly defended by such as he and also allowed them the privilege of having such feminine faults as vanity, megalomania, and the desire for applause.

Reinhardt. Kraus's attitude toward contemporary directors was so negative that he would permit neither Max Reinhardt nor Erwin Piscator, perhaps the most famous directors of the period, to perform his masterpiece, *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit.* His aversion for Reinhardt reached its climax when, supposedly attracted to Offenbach's operettas through Kraus, Reinhardt produced them on the stage with all of his elaborate stage decorations. "Offenbach-Schändung" (Desecration of Offenbach), Kraus called his work and enumerated the nine hundred and seventy-three assistants needed by Reinhardt, whereas Kraus himself believed he could do better with only one accompanist. He criticized Reinhardt's real grass, real horses, and gorgeous colors, all of which constituted proof to him that Reinhardt would be fully capable of attracting customers to a department store. A good theater director would take care not to attract attention to the stage lest he detract from the actors. Again Kraus's authorities were the romantics, E. T. A. Hoffmann, and Tieck,[1] who knew that masses, large stages, and beautiful clothes were justified only where they existed for their own sakes, as in ballet, but otherwise destroyed dramatic effect.[2] Reinhardt's talent, said Kraus, made him all the more dangerous. Entirely devoid of genuine feeling, he had yet succeeded in impressing everybody with his good taste. He had made the theater into a place of worship and the church into a sensation, thus expressing the supreme desires of his soul and the soul of mankind for foreign exchange and for tourist traffic.[3]

Piscator. It seems that Kraus did not regard Piscator quite so negatively as Reinhardt. Whereas Reinhardt was to him scarcely more

[1] Cf. p. 82.
[2] *Die Fackel,* 868–72 (März 1932), 6ff.
[3] *Ibid.,* 601–7 (November 1922), 8ff.; 13ff.

than a flashy business man, he viewed Piscator as a serious theater director who was merely always wrong. Approving on principle of Piscator's technique, actually Kraus's own, of using documents of the time on the stage, he rejected it in practice. He claimed, for instance, that Piscator involved in his production of Toller's *Hoppla, wir leben* (Hey, We Are Alive) too many technological wonders which had nothing to do with the theater.[1]

Kraus was most negative about Piscator when his discussion went beyond one of techniques. Actually he accused him of much the same faults as the liberal press:

> ... Kläglicheres, kleinbürgerlicheres, geistig Konterrevolutionäreres als diese Theaterspielerei ... als diese Entehrung des Kriegsleids durch die Zitierung vor die Seelen des Kurfürstendamms; gesinnungsmässig Niedrigeres als diesen Kunstbetrieb einer Weltrevolution ... hat die weite Welt nicht erlebt ...[2]

Operetta. The operetta was to Kraus the highest form of theater, "... Die Erfüllung des wahren Theatersinns ..."[3] His reason for considering Offenbach the greatest writer of operettas goes a long way to show what, to Kraus, constituted the greatness of an operetta. It was, in brief, the rendering of everyday life into poetry.[4] Music, produced by the passions, although a very integral part of operetta, was valueless, and therefore opera, in contrast with operetta, was nonsense. It presupposed a real world full of people who seemed absurd because they sang in the least probable circumstances.[5] Operetta, on the other hand, presupposing an absurd world without causality, lived in the chaos out of which the world was created; hence singing as a means of communication was entirely plausible. The nonsense of the operetta was romanticism. Music functioned by loosening the cramped knots of life and causality and by relaxing and refreshing mental activity. In its irresponsible gaiety it held the mirror of their follies before the eyes of those with enough imagination to see.

The great value of art, the important forms of which were, to Kraus, music and operetta, lay in its freedom from the ever increasingly stressed common sense. Since the operetta was the only form of stage

[1] *Ibid.*, 781–86 (Anfang Juni 1928), 23.

[2] ... Anything more miserable, more petit bourgeois, spiritually more counter-revolutionary than this play-acting ... than this dishonoring of the sorrows of war by presenting them to the characters of the Kurfüstendamm; anything of lower character than this art business of a world-revolution hasn't been seen in the whole wide world ... *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[3] The fulfillment of the true meaning of the theater ... *Ibid.*, 757–58 (April 1927), 43.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[5] *Sprüche und Widersprüche*, pp. 134ff.

art comparable, in Kraus's opinion, to music, it was also the only form in which musical accompaniment was not absurd but natural. This divorce from common sense was, in fact, the essence of theater, for if a play with thought content was effective on the stage, it was so only in spite of its substance.

Bad operettas. It was because Kraus so greatly admired operettas, especially those of Offenbach, Lecoque, Planquette, Audran, Sullivan, Suppé, Strauss, and Millöcker, that he felt strongly about what he believed to be nothing but *Gedudel, Gehopse und Gerülpse* (twaddle, hopsing and belching),[1] namely, the operettas of opportunists which made up the *schnöden Tändeleien der herrschenden Gesellschaft* (cheap triflings of the ruling society).

He objected to the cynical presentation of money-making propositions by such men as Molnár, Lehár, Oskar Strauss [2] and Benatsky [3] as art. Kraus blamed Max Reinhardt, who had dared to make a "musical revue" of the *Tales of Hoffmann*, for much of the harm done, but he considered Franz Lehár by far the most dangerous member of the "*Operettenbörse*" (stock exchange for operettas). He believed Lehár had been most successful in corrupting the genuine operetta, for he had taken away its essence by the introduction of a certain psychological plausibility and by the portrayal of a genuine (decadent) milieu. The operetta had to deteriorate because in the modern world it had become increasingly difficult to imagine a romantic world. Therefore the operetta had to become logical:

> ... keine Königsfamilie wird mehr beim blossen Wort "Trommel" zu musikalischen Exzessen hingerissen, kein Hauch eines Tyrannen wirft einen falsch mitsingenden Höfling nieder ...[4]

Kraus had great confidence in the pedagogic powers of the delightful old nonsensical operettas and was equally convinced that since modern operettas had become "psychologically plausible and sensible," they had lost their *raison d'être*. This was true to a much lesser extent of the newer operetta in general than of the particular Viennese style with its false sentimentality and its calculated "clever" plot and characters. Kraus believed that the Viennese operetta served merely as "ein Vorwort zu den gröhlenden Freuden des Nachtlebens" [5] and suggested that a

[1] *Die Fackel*, 712–16 (Ende Januar 1926), 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, 820–26 (Ende Oktober 1929), 47ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, 668–75 (Dezember 1924), 19.
[4] ... No royal family is moved any longer to musical excesses by the mere sound of the word "drum," the breath of a tyrant no longer bowls over a courtier singing a wrong note ... *Sprüche und Widersprüche*, p. 134.
[5] A foreword to the howling joys of night life. *Die chinesische Mauer*, p. 232.

theater be created in Vienna, dedicated entirely to the operettas of the "old school," admitting only the choicest of newly created musical works. [1]

Offenbach. To Kraus, Offenbach's operettas were the most perfect works of art. Not only did they blend music, nonsensical action, and stage effect most successfully, but, seemingly planless, they transcended themselves by parodying the supposedly carefully planned opera:

> ... Dass Operettenverschwörer singen, ist plausibel, aber die Opernverschwörer meinen es ernst und schädigen den Ernst ihres Vorhabens durch die Unmotiviertheit ihres Singens. Wenn nun der Gesang der Operettenverschwörer zugleich das Treiben der Opernverschwörer parodiert, so ergibt sich jene doppelte Vollkommenheit der Theaterwirkung, die den Werken Offenbachs ihren Zauber verleiht, weit über die Dauer jener politischen Anzüglichkeiten hinaus, auf welche die Nichtversteher seines Wesens grössten Wert legen ... [2]

It was because of the improbabilities of Offenbach's operettas and their lack of concern with differences of status and other aspects of so-called real life that they could make decisive impressions which would last a lifetime. They were not results of many individual decisions but organic units. Offenbach, the originator of the grotesque opera, was to Kraus the personification of supreme wisdom standing high above Wagner and Nietzsche with their childish stress on thought.[3] Although Offenbach was far ahead of his contemporaries, Kraus's own time, which in its turn was not so far from that of Napoleon III, had difficulties with the understanding of Offenbach.[4] Somewhat reminiscent of Daumier's caricatures, some of his operettas produce this gaiety by means of ridiculous figures which are unaware of their own ridiculousness.

This, however, was not really typical of Offenbach. Much more typical was *Madame l'Archiduc,* which Kraus considered his best work. In it the world was lit up by the genius of musical gaiety and profundity, and the sorrows of life were dissolved into a crazy fairy tale, thus reaching their purest spiritual form. In the later twenties Kraus saw more and more clearly that the political confusions and injustices only

[1] *Die Fackel,* 70 (Anfang März 1901), 16.

[2] ... It is plausible that conspirators in operettas should sing, but the conspirators in operas take it seriously and harm the seriousness of their enterprise by the lack of motivation in their singing. When the singing of the conspirators in operettas is at the same time intended as ridicule of the carryings on of the operatic conspirators, that double perfection of theatrical effect results which gives the works of Offenbach their charm, lasting far beyond the duration of those political allusions on which those who essentially do not understand him place the greatest value ... *Die chinesische Mauer,* pp. 227f.

[3] Cf. *Die Fackel,* 800–5 (Anfang Februar 1929). 62 ff.; 69f.

[4] *Ibid.,* 811–19 (Anfang August 1929), 76.

meant that the horrible wounds of the First World War would be pushed into the background by another, even worse disaster. He escaped into the fantastic fairy tale world of Offenbach where all *Zeitstoff* (time-bound subject matter) and accompanying ideologies were transcended, and thus he avoided taking sides in the real world believing:

> ... dass sich der Triumph der Dummheit und der Lumperei, denen wir mit Haut und Haar geopfert sind, nicht mehr bestreiten, sondern nur noch besingen lässt.[1]

Offenbach renaissance. Kraus's rediscovery of Offenbach [2] brought him, as did most ventures, more sorrow than joy. Offenbach was, he believed, generally ruined by inept performers on the stage, or by theater directors who, in poor imitation of Kraus, attempted Offenbach revivals. On the other hand, credit for any achievements of Kraus was, as usual, *totgeschwiegen*, even by the *Arbeiterzeitung*.

Deterioration of criticism. In order to demonstrate how theatrical criticism had deteriorated together with the theater, Kraus printed from time to time twenty- or thirty-year old excerpts from critics' columns couched in careful, conscientious language.[3]

In numerous satirical remarks, he showed that he saw no need for the existence of literary historians or even professors of literature.[4] This is not surprising, coming from him, who was consistently being ignored or at least ridiculed by these people of whom he was convinced that they were only writing for profit. In his own words:

> Was ist ein Historiker? Einer, der zu schlecht schreibt, um an einem Tageblatt mitarbeiten zu können.[5]

The literary historian was basically not an interpreter but a bibliophile, and Kraus's *bon mot* applied to him:

> Der Bibliophile hat annäherend dieselbe Beziehung zur Literatur wie der Briefmarkensammler zur Geographie.[6]

In order to prove their worthlessness, Kraus analyzed the various

[1] ... That the triumph of stupidity and meanness of which we are so thoroughly at the mercy can no longer be denied, but still can be sung about. *Ibid.*, 864–67 (Dezember 1931), 5.

[2] He also reworked many Offenbach libretti.

[3] *Die Fackel*, 657–67 (August 1924), 100ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, 347–48 (April 1912), 27f.

[5] What is a historian? Someone who writes too poorly to be able to work on a daily paper. *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 52.

[6] A bibliophile has about the same relation to literature as a stamp collector has to geography. *Die Fackel*, 376–77 (30. Mai 1913), 23.

histories of German literature appearing during his lifetime. He was particularly irritated by Georg Brandes whom he called

... einer der tiefsten Flachköpfe des 19. Jahrhunderts ...[1]

Kraus felt that literary criticism was largely responsible for the fame and general recognition of such unworthy, blood-thirsty war-poets as Ernst Lissauer, to him the unfortunate synthesis of Potsdam and Tarnopol. At another time, however, he observed that the literary historians were right after all, for Lissauer was a truer expression of Germany than Matthias Claudius, Germany's greatest lyric poet, who only said that "leider Krieg ist." [2]

Not Marxist literary theory. Despite his suggestion of the existence of class literatures, his rejection of bourgeois and his occasonal praise of proletarian literature, Kraus's theory of literature was, of course, not Marxist. He rejected modern or bourgeois literature because it had destroyed all absolute artistic values and made art a business. Literature, however, should not become social realism or a vehicle for the propagation of the social ideals either, not even of those of the proletariat. Kraus wanted to see a workers' literature much as he wanted the workers themselves: unspoiled by capitalistic aspirations and by middle class social pretenses. It was to be universally human literature, selected or written with the utmost care and sense of responsibility.

Lack of an explicit theory of literature. Since Kraus never systematically outlined a theory of literature, one only can seek to gain insight into his criteria of literary criticism by examining his critique of individual writers. This task is made difficult because, as has been seen, he never thoroughly analyzed ideological or artistic content but proceeded rather by accepting or rejecting a writer and describing his work in emotional terms of praise or ridicule. Thus one can only investigate the characteristics held in common by writers whom Kraus praised or rejected.

Some insight into Kraus's view of literature might also be gained from his statements about art in general. Characteristically, Kraus said more about what was not the purpose of art than what was. Thus, feeling that it should not be a decoration for the bourgeoisie, he scolded the rich Viennese ladies for proudly patronizing fake artists who in turn let the town know that these ladies were patronesses of the

[1] ... One of the shallowest flatheads of the nineteenth century using profound sounding words. *Ibid.*, 212 (23. November 1906), 14.

[2] Unfortunately there is a war going on. *Ibid.*, 601–7 (November 1922), 107.

arts.[1] He also resented clichés about art, such as that about its power to unite people, believing, in fact, that the opposite was true. The value of any art depended to him very much on whether or not there were people able to appreciate it. Thus the only productive deed left to an empty time like his own would be using a Rembrandt canvas to cover somebody's freezing feet, for no matter how low man had sunken, the preservation of his life was still the supreme value: "Denn der Geist steht zwar über dem Menschen, doch über dem, was der Geist geschaffen hat, steht der Mensch: ..." [2] The most superior being, however, was the artist. He was the man of culture, and culture was to Kraus the synthesis of values derived from man's past work. The artist was thus the carrier of past treasures in the present, and could dedicate himself best to his task if he had the conveniences of modern life at his disposal; they made it easier for him not to waste his efforts on technicalities. The philistine, on the other hand, was basically oriented toward the present. He did not see beyond its shallow surface, and merely decorated it with a medley of traditional symbols of culture which he did not understand. Kraus expressed this view in a nutshell when he obviously contrasted himself with his contemporaries:

> Der Philister lebt in der Gegenwart, die mit Sehenswürdigkeiten ausgestattet ist; der Künstler strebt in eine Vergangenheit, eingerichtet mit allem Komfort der Neuzeit.[3]

Besides, the artist had imagination, and thus, satisfied with a few hints, would see a clear picture in his mind; the literal-minded philistine turned sentimental when told by a night club singer "... dass ach die Liebe, ja die Liebe so schön sei, ..." [4]

He considered the present an especially low ebb in art; in fact, he rejected for instance all modern plastic art as mediocre with the exception of the works of the architect Adolf Loos, and of Oskar Kokoschka;

> ... weil die Wahrheit des entstellenden Genies über der Anatomie steht ...[5]

In fact, to Kraus, even the philistine, "who dirtied art with common

[1] *Die Fackel*, 347–48 (27. April 1912), 15ff.

[2] For the spirit does, to be sure, stand above man, but above that which man has created, stands man ... *Ibid.*, 514–18 (Ende Juli 1919), 48.

[3] The philistine lives in the present which is adorned with "sights worth seeing"; the artist stives for a past equipped with all the convenience of the modern age. *Die chinesische Mauer*, p. 272f.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 284.

[5] ... Because the truth of the distorting genius stands above anatomy. *Die Fackel*, 374–75 8. (Mai 1913), p. 32.

sense," stood far above the futurist with his extreme spiritual poverty. He regretted the sacrifices which even sincere moderns made for art, for they were wasted on a spiritually empoverished society. Dadaism was to Kraus not something to be passed over with a smile, but a very alarming sign of the contempory disintegration of the spirit.[1]

Critics. Even more than the artists themselves Kraus attacked their journalistic critics. Again he was thoroughly convinced that these merely pretended to understand art and therefore only criticized vaguely but never dealt with individual works. What especially irked him was the critics' air of objectivity and absolute knowledge. Whereas Bahr, as Kraus claimed probably erronously, could do little harm by his criticism since he was not taken seriously, Herzl was much more dangerous because, although he knew nothing either, he had more authority.

To Kraus, an aesthete was a person, who, himself unable to produce, usually bewailed the inadequacy of the creations of artists. A real artist could never merely be a follower in the fight for a cause. He could only be a leader, although often his leadership would only be followed by future generations.

Art. He often expressed the view that only that which remained after the subject matter was forgotten was art, thus again stressing that what mattered was language, form, rather than content. The extent to which something was art increased the further it was removed from the original stimulus. He believed that art, like love, was independent of circumstances. Indeed, what was became beautiful through love and art.[2] It also had no "practical" effect: (effect in the sense of "stage effect") "Effekt, ... ist Wirkung ohne Ursache. Kunst ist Ursache ohne Wirkung." [3] His view of art seems most valid when applied to his own writing:

> ... Kunst kann nur von der Absage kommen. Nur vom Aufschrei, nicht von der Beruhigung. Die Kunst, zum Troste gerufen, verlässt mit einem Fluch das Sterbezimmer der Menschheit. Sie geht durch Hoffnungsloses zur Erfüllung.[4]

It was above all the function of art continually to confront men with ever fresh visions of the eternal. Art was to shock man into the realization how far he has drifted from truth, and how empty his words

[1] *Ibid.*, 632–39 (Mitte Oktober 1923), 113f.

[2] *Nachts*, p. 21.

[3] (Stage-) effect is effect without cause. Art is cause without effect. *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 87.

[4] ... Art can only come from rejection. Only from the outcry, not from quiet satisfaction. Art, called in for consolation, leaves mankind's place of death with a curse. Its fulfillment comes through hopelessness ... *Nachts*, p. 59.

have become. Thus Kraus wanted to see the artist in the role of the prophet whose vision ought to be generally respected. What he saw instead was the respectable citizen who viewed the artist with scorn or ignored him altogether. In the words of Carl Dallago:

Weh der Zeit, in welcher Kunst die Erde nicht unsicher macht vor dem Abgrund, der den Künstler vom Menschen trennt und dem Künstler schwindlig wird und nicht dem Menschen.[1]

Art cleansed one from evil and thereby had a liberating influence on the artist. It was not a pastime and not a business. And about lyrics:

... Lyrik ist nicht die Prätension eines kleinen Ich, von der Natur angeschaut und bedient zu werden, sondern beruht auf einer Gegenseitigkeit, bei der auch dem Dichter die Augen übergehen. Die Bequemlichkeit, dass immer ein Sinniges folgt, wenn ein Inniges da ist, hat das deutsche Ohr verführt und unsäglichen Jammer über die Kunst gebracht ... Die Kunst als Zeitvertreib vertreibt uns die Ewigkeit ...[2]

Art and the times. Kraus expressed himself more extensively concerning the relation of his own time to art than about art itself. He believed that in contemporary culture where luxuries were bought unscrupulously with human sacrifices, art was necessarily only decorative. One could only create and be receptive to creativity if one's life had neither been lost through misery nor dedicated to luxury but rested in itself and was aware of the oneness with nature embracing all, from Goethe to the least spider. Since man had not been able to receive, the ability to give had also withered away. Only ability such as Kraus's own, which received its stimulus from discord, continued to exist and otherwise there was a complete vacuum in German literature. Thus Kraus was bound to reject most contemporary writers who misunderstood the basic tenor of their time, even if they had not, as he believed, made literature a business. There may be what seem puzzling contradictions in Kraus's criticisms of individual authors. No sooner are we satisfied to know that he rejected those who wrote for gain than we find him glorifying Altenberg's "Unverkäuflichkeit in der Prostitution" (unsalability in prostitution). If we find him praising Hauptmann as

[1] Woe unto the age in which art doesn't make the earth tremble, and when it is the artist and not man who becomes dizzy before the abyss that separates the artist from man. Carl Dallago, "Karl Kraus, der Mensch" in *Studien über Karl Kraus* (Innsbruck: Brenner Verlag) 1913, p. 41.

[2] ... Lyric poetry does not rest on the assumption of the little self that it is observed and served by nature, but rests on a mutuality which makes even the poet's eyes fill with tears. The cozy view, in which true always rhymes with blue has brought unspeakable misery to art ... art as a pastime drives eternity away from us. (Here a play on words in German with a second meaning: helps us while away eternity.) *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 91.

a poet of mercy, and might want to label Kraus on the basis of this interest in social problems, we are soon stunned by his irony with regard to Ibsen's defense of women's rights. We see, in fact, in the authors who were closest to him, such as Nestroy, Altenberg and Offenbach - he often mentioned Offenbach among authors, - that he identified literary greatness with separation from the problematic, whether of a politico-social or philosophic character. There great literature was art for its own sake, its aesthetic value lying less in its intelligible meaning than in the music and subconscious connotations of the language.

Thus we find that no such outward criteria are always valid. While, as we have seen, the somewhat imponderable aesthetic element did, of course, play a role with Kraus, and also that of ideological agreement with the particular author has to be taken into consideration, it is, in the last analysis, his conviction with regard to an author's moral quality that determined his stand. Therefore Kraus rejected Heine whom he considered the father of modern literature, and all those whom he considered his genuine descendants. As literature and, in fact, all of our civilization, in Kraus's view, succumbed to commercialization, they became separated from all absolute aesthetic values in the process of becoming mere subjects of journalism.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERNICIOUS PRESS

Fundamental opposition to the press. Kraus's very first aim in establishing *Die Fackel* was to fight the press, to undermine public confidence in it, and to undo the damage it was currently doing. If possible, his hatred against the press increased as time went on, but as early as the first *Fackel* in April 1899, he had already set down his program as a battle against "die periodisch erscheinenden Dummheiten und Lächerlichkeiten unseres politischen, gesellschaftlichen und literarischen Lebens . . ." [1]

Kraus hoped to teach the readers of the daily papers to read in such a way that they would understand the news correctly in spite of editorial distortions and would thus discard as useless chatter most of what the newspapers printed. Thus he would reduce the function of the press to that of transmitter of news.

Harmfulness. Throughout his life as an independent journalist, Kraus fought those powerful and widely-read Viennese newspapers which were read and controlled by industrialists and financiers. Most frequently and vociferously he attacked the *Neue Freie Presse* and *Die Zeit* as organs of political corruption full of misrepresentations and smoothly respectful glossings over of scandalous Austro-Hungarian financial transactions, including the unscrupulous profiteering in the Crownlands as well as in export trade.

Among the dangers of mechanization he considered the press "die Journaille," [2] the most devastating. Throughout most of his life, Kraus seemed to believe or at least wanted to believe that the main root of the evil in the world lay not in human nature but in that which deadened the soul most, the unconscientiously used and distributed printed

[1] . . . . the stupidity and ridiculousness of our political, social and literary life which manifests itself periodically. *Die Fackel*, 1 (Anfang April 1899), 4.

[2] A hybrid word made up of "Journalismus" and the French word "canaille," meaning something like rabble.

word. It continually fed the mind, supplying all the moral, political, and religious views, all knowledge, and all feelings. Instead of reporting as truthfully as possible, it misrepresented facts for the sake of ulterior purposes. Since there was no longer any reliable information, there was also no longer any significant public opinion. Kraus therefore said that mankind's only hope was that it would become so stupid and primitive from reading newspapers that it would have to learn the first elements of reading and thinking over again, and then have learned its lesson.[1]

He believed that the press actually had all of the real power in the country, the power which the government seemed to have.[2]

Here Kraus's views were perhaps most strongly expressed in the words of Wilhelm Liebknecht, as reprinted in *Die Fackel*:

> Keine Niedertracht, welche die Presse nicht für Hochsinnigkeit auszugeben, kein Verbrechen, das sie nicht zu einer grossherzigen Tat umzufälschen bereit wäre; kein Schurke, dem sie nicht den Lorbeer des Ruhmes oder den Eichenkranz der Bürgertugend aufs Haupt setzte, wenn es ihr zweckdienlich erscheint.[3]

Although the original attack was directed primarily against the liberal bourgeois press, Kraus made practically no distinction between it and the socialist press. Both were, in his opinion, irresponsible, and, in spite of all claims to the contrary, served to enslave, to demoralize, and to cripple the population intellectually, turning it into a mass of political and economic serfs without its realizing what was happening to it. The imagination of the people was destroyed because nothing was left to it; everything was served ready made, with the "proper" sentiments added. This evil force was so strong "... dass ein Zeitungsblatt mehr gegen unsere sittliche Entwicklung bewirkt hat als sämtliche Bände Goethes für sie." [4]

The press destroyed not only the human mind but also physical nature. About the time of the First World War, Kraus realized with horror that tens of thousands of trees had to be felled daily in order to produce the newspapers. He stressed that fact frequently as in the following excerpt:

[1] *Ibid.*, 811–19 (Anfang August 1929).

[2] *Ibid.*, 54 (Ende September 1900), 17.

[3] There is no baseness which the press would not be ready to falsify and pass off as a magnanimous deed; there is no crook on whose head it would not place the laurels of glory or the oak wreath of citizenly virtue whenever it serves its purposes. *Ibid.*

[4] ... that the negative effect of one newspaper on our moral development has been greater than the combined effect of all the volumes of Goethe. *Ibid.*, 519–20 (November 1919), 10.

Urwälder werden kahl geschlagen, damit der Geist der Menschheit zu Papier werde, und die obdachlosen Elefanten führen es ihr zu ...[1]

Kraus considered the "refined" press even more dangerous than the so-called cheap press because it was all the more likely to succeed in cheating the public. He did not, like Harden, want to improve the press, but to rob it of its most essential characteristics and thus destroy it for all practical purposes.

In Chapter V, Kraus's view of the press as the strongest factor in bringing about that commercialization of all values which paved the way for World War I, will be discussed. He believed that the press collectively was much more guilty than any individual writer whose ways were bound to be on the whole less subtle and more direct. The press spent years preparing the readers for war, first by calumny and then by constant instigation.

To Kraus, the most extreme of all pressmen, as well as those also most responsible for the War, were the Jewish journalists, many of whom were with the *Neue Freie Presse*. They had, he claimed, by their unscrupulous writing brought about the rise of National Socialism.[2] Whereas in most Central and Western European countries several important and influential papers balanced each other, and thus created an endurable oligarchy, Austria's intellectual life was ruled almost monarchically, according to Kraus, by the *Neue Freie Presse*.

This situation was aggravated by the fact that the *Neue Freie Presse* carried with it the suggestion of intellectuality and thus authority.[3] It gained further power by suggesting that it was speaking for the majority rather than expressing an individual's opinion. The reporters' smug claim that their information was "Informationen aus diplomatischen Kreisen" (information from diplomatic sources) or "Mitteilungen von unterrichteter Seite" (reports from informed sources) gave weight to quite unfounded reports. At the same time the press, and especially the *Neue Freie Presse*, kept those whom it represented, "the people," or perhaps "the intelligentsia" from being able to protest effectively when they were misguided or otherwise abused. Because there was a great deal of freedom from government interference, there was immense power in the hands of people inferior in every way:

Das Weltverbrechen bestand und besteht darin, dass die von jederlei Technik

[1] Primeval forests are cut down, so that the spirit of man may be turned into paper, and the shelterless elephants transport it ... *Weltgericht*, I, 186.

[2] *Die Fackel*, 890–905 (Ende Juli 1934), 141.

[3] *Ibid.*, 167 (26 Oktober 1904), 9.

ersetzte Persönlichkeit und die von der Anonymität bezogene Autorität es Köpfen und Charakteren zweifelhaften Werts ermöglicht hatte, vor solchen, unter deren Durchschnitt sie geschaffen sind, den Schein von Wissen und Würde zu arrogieren ... dass die ... Unzuständigen das Wort haben ... der Auswurf der Menschheit ...[1]

Commercialization. Economic interests, he observed, had become to an ever increasing extent the object and the content of what even the press called *belles lettres.* Formerly only the merits of governments, banks, and theaters had been praised in the press, but recently the champagne and bread manufactures and the department stores had begun to use chatty feuilletons indirectly extolling the virtues of their products. Again Kraus objected most to the *Neue Freie Presse* which contained the subtlest advertisements. Kraus found less fault with the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* or *Neues Wiener Journal* because they were more candid about their intentions.

The *Neue Freie Presse* had also been the champion of the fight against the newspaper stamp,[2] and with its characteristic dishonesty it had claimed to be fighting in the name of liberalism. That was the way, Kraus complained, in which the new century was started by that *Blätterhülle* (leafy cover) of the *Ekonomist,* the economic supplement of the *Neue Freie Presse,* that corrupt but necessary support of the Austro-Hungarian government.

When a paper discussed art under the heading *Der Warenmarkt,* (merchandise market) neither the paper nor the reader were any longer aware of what a label they had given to art. After all, the press had gone far beyond that. When a court trial which was supposed to be secret was spread all over the front pages, none profited because feelings had become dulled to the fact that privacy, in Kraus's own opinion the greatest treasure in life, had been dragged into the mud. It was easy to make indiscreet statements about people when writing anonymously. Because papers had to appear daily, journalists had to supply material daily, regardless of whether or not there was anything suitable for publication; Kraus believed that if it were required that newspaper articles be signed, worthless opinions would no longer be expressed with the same air of authority.

[1] The cosmic crime consisted and consists of the fact that personality, replaced by all kinds of technology and authority derived from anonymity made it possible for heads and characters of doubtful value to assume the appearance of knowledge and dignity ... that the incompetent have the word ... the dregs of mankind. *Ibid.*, 686–90 (Mai 1925), 3f.

[2] Kraus referred here to the Austrian government's way of levying taxes on newspapers. After the victory of the *Neue Freie Presse* in having that tax abolished, it claimed to be able to give extra service, having been freed from an economic burden. Kraus claimed that no difference was noticeable.

Prestige. The very fact that the newspapers were printed helped to give them prestige; it created the illusion that they could even instruct a specialist in his own field. How much more firmly he thought then would, for instance, a specialist in literature believe that his editorial writer was a specialist in the science of warfare. It perturbed Kraus to see the great respect which people had for the business of journalism as opposed to the business of politics; in the latter case he was consoled by the realization that politics at least was in ill repute. He hoped that radio and television would some day destroy people's illusions about the press. No one, he thought, would be able to admire the press as soon as he saw the faces and heard the voices behind it. During Kraus's lifetime this hope was far from fulfilled.

Literature especially was taken over entirely by the press; it passed judgement on what literary works were to be considered good or even "classics" and also controlled the theaters. These "swindlers of public opinion" corrupted the public taste by making sure that it was exposed not to what was valuable, but only to what was profitable to the press. The cliquishness of the press saw to it that young writers and artists were not given a chance; actors and actresses especially were defenseless against it. True scholarly worth and actual value in art were taken very lightly. The press quoted Goethe constantly, but misquoted him,[1] and the typical "educated reader" whose knowledge was largely the pseudo-knowledge of the readers of the *Neue Freie Presse* scarcely noticed when that newspaper casually made incorrect pseudo-cultured remarks. Kraus untiringly recorded such *faux pas* in *Die Fackel,* usually with some humorous comments. Thus when the *Neue Freie Presse* mentioned Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* with the sole purpose of appearing learned, but made factual errors in the article, Kraus suggested that the paper had better stick to the marriages of the Pollack family.[2] He wrote to Harden:

Sie (i.e. Berlin) haben eine selbständige Literatur ... wenn auch eine gekünstelte ... Die unsere ist auf die Zeitungen angewiesen, bei uns hat der Reporter den Schriftsteller verschlungen, und darum zeigt unser Zeitungswesen die höhere Entwicklung ... Das freie Schrifttum hat seine besten Säfte an das Feuilleton, hier und dort gar an den Leitartikel abgegeben.[3]

[1] Cf. *Die Fackel,* 10 (Anfang Juli 1899) 7f.

[2] As essentially fictitious nouveau riche family about which many jokes were told. *Ibid.,* 198 (12. März 1906), 24.

[3] You (i.e. Berlin) have an independent literature ... although an artificial one ... Ours has to rely on newspapers: here the reporter has devoured the writer, and therefore our journalism shows a higher development ... The free literary profession has given its best to the feuilleton, and sometimes even to the editorial. *Ibid.,* 136 (Ende Avril 1903), 16f.

Pretentious nonsense. Kraus saw in the press the microcosm in which all the evils of the society of his day were mirrored. Its nonentities, hidden behind the printed page, were pompously introduced and described by each other. These journalists, and again especially those of the *Neue Freie Presse,* constantly printed the most absurd nonsense, calling it physics, chemistry, or the like. There they were on even safer ground than in the case of literature; most of the readers, knowing nothing about science, glanced through such passages and were profoundly impressed.

To combat this practice, Kraus introduced in *Die Fackel* the column "Lapidares aus der *Neuen Freien Presse,*" [1] in which he quoted examples of especially ridiculous statements; he noted, for instance, that in discussing plants the *Neue Freie Presse* spoke of the "... unorganischen Lebewelt." [2] The *Neues Wiener Journal* made an even more absurd mistake when it claimed as its constant contributors Daudet and Chekhov, two authors who had long since died.

In order to unveil such hypocrisy, Kraus employed all his usual media, including satire, polemic, quotation of authorities, photography, direct quotations, and in addition a special kind of practical joke called "Grubenhund" after a practical joke which originated with Arthur Schütz.[3] Realizing that the *Neue Freie Presse* would be only too eager to print a letter from a reader discussing a contemporary event in a learned way, Kraus wrote just such a letter. He described a mining engineer's experience during an earthquake, using pseudoscientific terms in such a way that one did not need to be an expert to see clearly that they added up to mere nonsense. He spoke of cosmic and telluric earthquakes, and, to top it all off, mentioned that the *Grubenhund* became restless and began to bark.

Although it would seem that newspapers should not be held responsible for the contents of letters to the editor, Kraus, and many of his readers, experienced an almost childish delight each time he succeeded in having such a nonsensical passage printed in the *Neue Freie Presse* or in another paper, and often encouraged his readers to submit such items. A very eulogistic poem about Schober delighted Kraus because the combined first letters of each line spelled "*Felonie.*"

[1] Lapidares: matters of fundamental importance.

[2] ... The live world of inorganic life. *Die Fackel,* 18 (Ende September 1899), 31.

[3] There is, of course, no such animal as *Grubenhund.* The mention of the animal could, however, be printed without arousing any suspicion because the word must have sounded familiar to the editors on account of its similarity to *Gruberhunt,* the cart on which coal is transported out of mines.

The theory behind this activity was, of course, that the press would thus be driven to the point where it would hardly dare to print anything submitted by telephone, telegram, or letter for fear it might be a "*Grubenhund,*" and by doing so fall into discredit with the public. There was no end to the possible varieties of "*Grubenhunde.*" Immediately after the First World War, Kraus sent a letter to the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* protesting against the threat to the life of Ernst Toller by the Munich government, and signed the names of seven contemporary writers, among them Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Hermann Bahr.[1] They declared publicly that they had not written the letter but thanked the unknown writer for doing something which they should have done themselves. Somewhat later the "*Grubenhund*" was followed by the *Laufkatze,* a similar fictitious animal.[2] Kraus believed that he had "... den wissenschaftlichen Tonfall entlarvt, der dem gesellschaftlichen Leben notwendiger war, als die Wissenschaft der Gesellschaft ..." [3] He concluded: "Ja, diese Heiterkeit ist eine Ehrenpflicht Europas geworden, und zu einem Weltblatt gehört schliesslich, dass die ganze Welt sich kugelt ..." [4]

These practical jokes, however, also brought unpleasant consequences for Kraus. Editors usually claimed that false reports, no matter how stupid, had been sent in by Kraus. They continued to do so despite Kraus's protestations that he would never send in a trick report which could not be detected by watchful editors.

Perhaps Kraus had succeeded to some extent in unveiling the emptiness underlying the pretentious language in which mere hazy opinions were expressed and the grave tone which could get away with discussing earthquakes and elections from the viewpoint of family news. He had convinced at least a few people that the journalist was just as much a businessman as the one who sold coffee or paprika next door. Hoping that he might still be able to save what was left of European culture, he had made these people skeptical.

War. Being a business, the press was not capable of siding sincerely and enthusiastically with any party in a conflict, no matter how faithfully its members might at various times have acted the parts of

[1] *Die Fackel,* 514–18 (Ende Juli 1919), 1ff.

[2] *Laufkatze,* in the language of mining meaning "trolley." *Ibid.,* 431–36 (2 August 1916), 116.

[3] ... He had unmasked the scientific tone of voice which was more necessary for social life than science was for society .... *Untergang,* p. 149.

[4] Indeed, this gaiety has become Europe's honorable duty, and it is, after all, necessary for a paper of world-wide significcoance that the whole world should roll with laughter ... *Ibid.,* pp. 149f.

partisans. Kraus believed that war especially offered the press great business opportunities and rewarded it for availing itself of them by praising war's heroism. The same mercenary tendencies which, as Kraus believed, led to the First World War and made possible its continuance for four years could already be found in the newspapers which he had commented on in the early years of *Die Fackel.*[1] Thus, in 1904, he reprinted a eulogy by *Die Zeit* on the *Škoda* armament factories which supplied arms to both parties in the Russo-Japanese War, remarking ironically: "Die Zeit ist ein antikorruptionistisches Blatt und hat diese Texteinschaltung gewiss gratis besorgt." [2]

Kraus was convinced that the Viennese press was "worse" than the provincial press in so far as it took more for granted its task of influencing its readers instead of that of transmitting news.

In der Provinz, wo der Charakter noch nicht auf den Journalismus draufgegangen ist, wo Druckerschwärze noch nicht auf das Wesen abgefärbt hat und nichts weiter als das vorhandene Mittel bedeutet, ein ordentliches Gefühl des Privatmannes mitzuteilen, erscheinen vor und nach jeder Vorlesung grössere Aufsätze ... fast immer ... auf einem höheren Niveau ... als alles ...(in) Grosstädte (n) ...[3]

He believed, nevertheless, that all the papers shared in the war guilt. According to Kraus, the international cliques of journalists, devoid of genuine patriotism, were responsible for the First World War. In *Weltgericht* he said of a French journalist:

... Der Herr Hutin ist ein Journalist, der vom Tod lebt ... warum sollte er weniger auf die Abnehmer bedacht sein, als die Interessenten diesseits der Rheingrenze ...[4]

Deterioration of the readers. How could people help deteriorating mentally if their reading material consisted almost entirely of a daily paper written by people whose *blasé* attitude kept them from realizing how primitive they actually were? The journalists all agreed in their contempt for "was über das Notwendige und über dass Fassbare hinausgeht ..." [5] Kraus was referring particularly to the fun poked

[1] *Ibid.*, 143 (6 Oktober 1903), 29f.

[2] *Die Zeit* is a newspaper opposed to corruption and surely printed this text free of charge. *Ibid.*, 157 (19. März 1904), 21.

[3] Outside of the large cities where character has not yet been sacrificed to journalism, where ink has not yet blackened the essential being and is nothing more than the existing means of communicating the decent feelings of the private individual, major essays appear before and after every lecture ... almost always on a higher level ... than anything (in) large cities .... *Ibid.*, 387–88 (7 November 1913), 29.

[4] Mr. Hutin is a journalist whose livelihood is death ... why should he be less concerned with customers than interested parties on this side of the Rhine? ... *Weltgericht*, II, 53.

[5] What goes beyond the necessary and the graspable ... *Untergang*, p. 152.

by journalists at a Japanese who had committed *harakiri*. On that occasion they had revealed their utter inability to feel anything like awe in the face of self-inflicted death brought about by strong convictions.

The readers were, in Kraus's opinion, the victims, but they were also guilty in so far as they bought and read newspapers. Everybody should go on strike against the press, even the printers and the mailmen.[1]

Values. By attacking the liberal press, Kraus, of course, also attacked the bourgeois values which it represented. Once more it was the *Neue Freie Presse* which most naively betrayed its materialistic "ideals." To justify a long obituary, its editor-in-chief, Moriz Benedikt, felt that he had to point out the importance of the deceased by telling of the dead man's luxurious life. The same value scale became obvious when the officiating rabbi praised the same person by saying "Die Glaubensangelegenheiten betrieb er mit einem Ernst, als ob sie Geschäfte wären, und umgekehrt." [2]

Writing had become a goal in itself, reporting more important than events, and the ultimate product was judged only by its commercial value. News could, therefore, be manipulated, censored, and changed as needed. Thus the press changed numbers, made dead persons live and claimed the opposite, ignoring the existence of inconvenient opponents although it did not mind plagiarizing from them. It had, as Kraus kept saying, no principles whatever.

Thus, years after the Hilsner affair,[3] Kraus was able to print what had the effect of an exclamation mark ending his passionate tirades against what he considered the hysteria of the liberal press in connection with the affair. It was in *Die Fackel* of January 27, 1912, that he criticized the *Neue Freie Presse* for employing a man by the name of Urban, formerly of the antisemitic and naturally anti-Hilsner *Deutsches Volksblatt*, in an editorial position. They hired him as what was called in Viennese Jewish circles a "*Paradegoi*." [4] Such an appointment revealed all the lack of actual concern of a paper which had for years

[1] *Nachts*, p. 90.

[2] He dealt with matters of faith as seriously as if they were business, and vice versa.

[3] Before Easter, 1899, a girl was found murdered near Polna, close to the Bohemian-Moravian boundary. Because of rumors, the Jewish shoemaker's apprentice Leopold Hilsner was suspected of having committed ritual murder, and after a brief trial sentenced to death. The sentence was converted into a life term in the penitentiary, and he was pardoned in 1916. The trial caused much unrest and antisemitic propaganda. T. G. Masaryk was Hilsner's most outstanding defender. *Jüdisches Lexikon*, Bd. IV, Jüdischer Verlag, 1930, column 1040f.

[4] *Goi* is a derogatory Yiddish word for "Gentile." A *Paradegoi* is a Gentile whose name is used by predominantly Jewish organizations in order to make them appear less Jewish.

lived off the conviction that there was no such thing as ritual murder and, for the sake of that conviction, as Kraus claimed, had lowered itself to the level of Austrian idiocy.

According to Kraus, the public had come to take it for granted that the press adhered to no scale of values except that implied in serving its own ends, and that every paper treated the same event with a different bias. Kraus charged that what was printed was not the valuable, but the sensational, which would sell the most copies of the paper. Thus, he related, the papers had no room for the news about the discovery of an important Raimund-manuscript [1]; the finder was told to have the news published in the form of a paid advertisement, like one selling rat poison, as Kraus added. There was, however, always plenty of room to print chatty details about the lives of contemporary actors. During the 1930's, the name of the actor, Alexander Moissi, especially, appeared in the papers daily with discussions of his "philosophy," his view of Christianity, and his euphonic name. Kraus could not help comparing the present with the old days when there were still great actors like Iffland who were discussed neither so continually nor so chattily, and whose immortality, Kraus felt, was yet somehow more assured. The press wanted to entertain and had few inhibitions on the way to achieving that goal. It was not aware of the bad taste involved in printing side by side two columns, one regretting the passing away of well-known socialites during the past season and the other an installment of Hermann Bahr's pseudo-philosophic diary.[2]

Lack of dignity. The press had no dignity because it had no principles. Its so-called dignity was to Kraus only a thin veneer of pretense, ridiculous and stupid, and merely the raw material for satire. In fact, its satiric features were so obvious that much of what the press wrote fell naturally into place as satire merely by being quoted by Kraus. Even death announcements seemed like jokes when they appeared along with advertisements for the business of the deceased within the black border of mourning.

Relations with business. Business and the liberal press worked hand in hand. Kraus charged that a reporter admitted himself that he was not allowed to comment favorably about a certain person whose economic interests were opposed to those of the paper. Thus, for instance, if an actor refused to come to the "Concordiaball," [3] he had

[1] *Die Fackel*, 137 (11. Mai 1903), 12f.
[2] *Ibid.*, 838–44 (September 1930), 8ff.
[3] Cf. p. 105.

an extremely difficult time professionally in Vienna. Such people were, if at all possible, described by the press in the same manner as the villains of cheap novels.

The relations of the press with the stock exchange were particularly intimate. By means of large advertisements which not even decent papers could refuse, these institutions bought favorable criticism. Although the readers of some papers, such as those of the *Arbeiterzeitung*, would hardly have been interested in the stock exchange, it advertised there in order to undo the unfavorable criticism of itself on the editorial pages of such papers.[1] The executives of the press, Kraus claimed, were rewarded for their cooperation by gifts of various shares in amounts directly proportionate to the size of the paper. Kraus claimed that such transactions often took the form of actual extortion.[2] Sometimes the authorities found out, but that made little difference because the bribed judges freed the bribed editors. The tangible result of such an affair was merely, according to Kraus, that coal oil barons had to make up for the money lost by extortion.

When there was a scandal which the newspapers ought to have exposed, they were, according to Kraus, usually bribed into silence or at least persuaded to give only half the truth, and spare some of the culprits. As a matter of fact, in order not to hurt their relations with anyone, the papers usually refrained from anything but vague complaints, accusing no one in particular.

An editor of the *Neue Freie Presse* is supposed to have said frankly: "Hier haben Sie den Kopf des Blattes: *Neue Freie Presse.* Das muss stehen bleiben; alles andere ist gegen bar zu haben." [3] Kraus saw the press as a business subordinating everything to the one goal of making money. Political editorials were determined by the business interests of the banks which advertised most.[4] News of automobile accidents occured only in papers not carrying advertisements of automobile firms.

Plagiarism, sensationalism, and gossip. It actually seems that the press sometimes permitted its contributors to plagiarize as long as they were not caught. Kraus was one of the few who read too carefully not to notice that an article in the *Neues Wiener Journal* must have been plagiarized from a German paper when it spoke of "Eduard VII, der

[1] Cf. p. 153.
[2] *Die Fackel*, 33 (Mitte Februar 1900), 10ff.
[3] Here you have the heading of the paper: *Neue Freie Presse.* That must stand. Everything else is available for cash. *Scheu*, p. 16.
[4] *Die Fackel*, 347–48 (27. April 1912), 10ff.

Onkel unseres Kaisers," and "unser Bismarck." [1] Printing news before it took place was also already common on Kraus's day, as was the pretense that specific items of news had been wired to specific papers. For money they would go so far as to print fictitious news items in order to spare one person's feelings. Otherwise, Kraus added, they did not suppress any of the gory and sensational details of a suicide or murder, in such cases preferring money to sparing the feelings of many. The press reported court scenes of murder trials as if they had been theatrical performances, listing the personages present as if gossiping about social events. Furthermore, the press had bad enough taste to concentrate on amusing aspects of the tortures of trials, and the public enjoyed this. All participants were examined very closely for their reactions, and woe unto them if they did not cry at the "right moments!" Reports were changed, added, intensified, or omitted to suit the highest bidder and to increase the circulation of the paper. At the same time, according to Kraus, the press succeeded in the remarkable feat of making it plausible to the readers that it was ashamed of the public knowledge of "immoral things," although at the same time it was primarily responsible for the spreading of that very knowledge. All this was done, especially by the liberal press, with an air of refinement and in a jargon all its own.

Chattiness. One of the seemingly harmless practices of the press was to invent sensational news or even to use "interesting" items from ancient issues over and over again. Yet, according to Kraus, what helped the press particularly in its struggle for world domination was this very chattiness, this presentation of human interest stories at the right moments and in such a way as to distract the attention of the public from the real issues which the press would rather handle without the help of the public. Thus, the documentary evidence of the Dreyfus case was not discussed, but rather his appearance on his return from exile. Statesmen's actions were ignored but their private habits were made public. Kraus was particularly aroused by the *Vossische Zeitung*'s playful reports from the meetings of the League of Nations. These reports concerned the delegates' chats about fashions, food, and drink, and that a mere ten years after the war.[2] The writer of the elaborate description of a Soviet Ambassador at a very bourgeois tea or of the list of important personages present at the Labour Party's May celebration may, contrary to Kraus's belief, have been aware of

[1] *Ibid.*, 136 (Ende April 1903), 24f. "Edward, the uncle of our emperor," and "our Bismarck."
[2] *Ibid.*, 820–25 (Ende Oktober 1929), 108ff.

the grotesqueness of his copy. Kraus wondered who could actually be interested in the crown princess' second marriage, or in the fiftieth anniversary of an otherwise undistinguished man's first visit to a certain coffee house, if the public had not been taught to be interested. How was it possible that the reading public did not protest against the frequently repeated details of the lives of the people who were in the public eye only because the press had put them there? Who cared whether Max Reinhardt came to his appointments late, regularly, or not at all? What difference did it make where an actress spent her holidays? [1]

As he did frequently, Kraus compared the Viennese press unfavorably in this respect also with the German press:

Noch ist die deutsche Presse in der geschwätzigen Berichterstattung nicht so weit als die Wiener, in der alles, ein Ball, ein Diner, ein Selbstmord, eine Feuersbrunst, ein Strassenbahnunglück mit dem Aufwand von spaltenlangen Schilderungen, unter sorgfältiger, geradezu kindischer Darstellung auch der unwesentlichen Einzelheiten beschrieben wird ... [2]

Publicity campaigns. Kraus often expressed himself against publicity campaigns, which could only serve to distort the view which the public would eventually form of an artist. But instead of diminishing, these campaigns continued to grow more frequent and more intensive, and so shameless that journalist husbands thought nothing of praising their own actress wives in their columns. Kraus believed one of the worst cases of this kind was that of the young musician Erich Wolfgang Korngold.[3] The press, of which the boy's father was a member, had the bad taste to compare Korngold with Mozart and even with Jesus, while at the same time making derogatory remarks about Wagner and Anton Bruckner, and continuing to ignore Hugo Wolf, even after his death.

Language. No matter how low a level private expression had reached in spoken German, it still seemed art to Kraus compared with the language of the press. Beginning with the technical matter of the press's carelessness about misprints, Kraus protested against any practices characteristic of the language of journalism. He hated "sprachliche Gemeinheiten," [4] which have come more and more to be

[1] *Ibid.*, 4 (Anfang Mai. 1899), 18.

[2] In chatty reporting of news the German press has not yet gone as far as the Viennese who describe everything, a ball, a dinner, a suicide, a fire, a streetcar accident in long columns, with the careful, even childish description of unnecessary details ... *Ibid.*, 384–85 (13 Oktober 1913), 25.

[3] *Ibid.*, 313–14 (Dezember 1910), 1f.

[4] Instances of linguistic indecency.

taken for granted, such as headlines from which articles were omitted, and the press's incorrect use of words. Such speed could not prevent minds from crawling like snails.[1] Kraus objected as much to the sloppy jargon of predominantly Jewish journalists in their "familiar" essays as to the affected language of the "formal" essays of the others. He very frequently caught the peculiar character of the former in his *Glossen*.[2] These same writers seemed to Kraus even more objectionable when, trying to be literary, they said things he was sure they could never have felt. Kraus's own caricatures of that pretentious style described it most eloquently:

Endlich, auf Seite 11 kommt ein Adjektivkünstler, der uns erzählt, dass die variabelsten Meister mit asthmatischer Kraft und neurasthenischer Energie die graziösesten, apartesten, kokettesten, verhauchend feinsten Tricks des Metiers aus Motiven, Stimmungen, Klängen vermöge der erlauchten Bravour und der lodernden Mechanistik ihres biegsamen, schlanken, chevaleresken Stils von brillanter, expansiver, korrelativer, reflexiver Übereinstimmung im Aufspüren verdeckter Psychologien, zitternd von instinktivem Verstehen und fast souverän entzündet an der winkeligen Führung der Konturen, aber mit blendender, blitzender, in konzessiv manirierter Geschmeidigkeit aufpeitschender Eloquenz ... in Wahn und Welt zwischen Beethoven, Bahr, Strindberg, Salten, Hugo Wolf, Kornau, Walt Whitman, Soyka, Schönberg ... Shakespeare, Friedell, Kant, Oppenheimer, Van Gogh, Wertheimer und Jean Paul Stefan Grossmann ...[3]

As has been shown earlier, Kraus believed that the sloppy and generally unconscientious and calculating use of language originated with Heine. As developed by the press, this language was an important symptom of the decline of Western civilization. The language of the press included that of Harden as well as of the predominantly Jewish liberal dailies, and was in itself a clear expression of a phenomenon Kraus abhorred – the meeting of two antagonistic spheres of values. In this case it was the homogenization of culture and material gain, in which he saw the origin of the First World War, portrayed at its climax in *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit.*

[1] *Ibid.*, 136 (Ende April 1903), 23.

[2] Cf. chap. 11.

[3] Finally, on page 11, there appears an artist of the adjective who tells us that the most variable masters with asthmatic power and neurasthenic energy (use) the most graceful, most unusual, most coquettish, the finest tricks of the trade out of motifs, moods and sounds by means of the illustrious bravery and the flaming technique of their flexible, tender, chivalrous style of brilliant, expansive, correlative, reflexive coincidence in tracing hidden psychologies, trembling with instinctive understanding, and almost supremely inflamed by the angular tracing of the contours, but with sparkling eloquence in madness and world between Beethoven, Bahr, Strindberg, Salten, Hugo Wolf, Kornau, Walt Whitman, Soyka, Schönberg ... Shakespeare, Friedell, Kant, Oppenheimer, Van Gogh, Wertheimer and Jean Paul Stefan Grossmann (sic) ... *Die Fackel*, 387–88 (17. November 1913), 2.

As time went on, Kraus wondered more and more how he could formerly have objected to the press in the idyllic time when brothels were not yet advertised openly and the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* did not yet need to be illustrated, because people were not yet so *verblödet* (idiotic) as to be unable to read.[1] He praised the old days when the private lives discussed were not those of the Jewish bourgeoisie but at least of members of the old socially prominent families. Before the rule of the press, "die Jauche der Bedürfnisse ergoss sich noch nicht in den Kanal des Geistes. Keine Nachfrage entsprang noch keinem Angebot. Man schrieb schön und spielte piano." [2] Young journalists would not have written: "Wir haben keine Heldenlieder mehr, dafür aber Zeitungsberichte ..." [3] Elsewhere in a connection with the press, Kraus spoke of "... die durch sie bedingte Rückentwicklung der künstlerischen Empfänglichkeit ..." [4]

Attacks on specific papers. In the course of his career, Kraus directed his attacks against all the Viennese dailies. He did everything he could to ruin the *Zeit,* especially during the first months of its existence, and at different times concentrated on various humorous weeklies. The most constant target of his attacks, however, was the *Neue Freie Presse;* in fact, whenever he said merely "die Presse" or "die liberale Presse" (the liberal press), he usually meant the *Neue Freie Presse.* It embodied for him all the evils, not only of the journalism of his time, but also of bourgeois society and of the age in general. He always spoke of its degeneration and thus of the press's loss of significance, but the very persistence of his attacks proved the opposite. When Kraus called another paper the worst, this was not to be taken too seriously. Thus as early as 1900 he said about the *Wiener Tageblatt:* "Dass Ihr Blatt das allerschmutzigste ist, darüber geben Sie sich wohl selbst keinem Zweifel mehr hin." [5] Then he called its editor-in-chief, Frischauer, a "klebriger Herr" (sticky gentleman). Still, the *Neue Freie Presse* remained his pet hate.

Many people wondered, or pretended to wonder, why Kraus was still fighting against Austrian liberalism when it was a well-known fact that

[1] *Ibid.*, 649–56 (Juni 1924) 56.

[2] The liquid manure of human needs had not yet been poured into the canal of the spirit. No demand still corresponded to no supply. One wrote beautifully and played piano (softly). *Untergang*, p. 483.

[3] We have no more heroic lays, but we do have newspaper reports ... *Ibid.*, p. 489.

[4] The retrogressive development of artistic sensitivity which depends on them .... *Die Fackel*, 781–86 (Anfang Juni 1928), 48.

[5] You yourself probably no longer doubt that your newspaper is the very dirtiest one. *Ibid.*, 33 (Ende Februar 1900), 29. The *Wiener Tageblatt* had copied an item from *Die Fackel* and called it an original report.

it had been on the decline since 1879. It must, therefore, be stressed that it was not liberal ideology against which he fought, but the bourgeois qualities usually characteristic of so-called liberal papers at a time of such deterioration that principles had become irrelevant, but their effectiveness had perhaps even increased. The prototype of such a liberal paper was the *Neue Freie Presse.* Since it was written largely for assimilationist Jews, the paper's policy was to suppress news about Jews, appeals for Jewish relief, and, of course, anything which might have furthered the cause of Zionism. Kraus was therefore at any rate not entirely unjust when he spoke of the incompatibility of the two branches of Theodor Herzl's activity, that of feuilletonist for the *Neue Freie Presse* and that of head of the Zionist movement.

Kraus considered the antisemitic press "better" than the Jewish, believing it less intelligent and therefore less dangerous. He saw no difference between the two as far as commercial motives and lack of principles were concerned. In spite of all the ado which the Christian Socialist press made about its earnestness, it was manned basically by *petits bourgeois,* who neither hated corruption enough nor saw sharply enough to perceive it. If the danger of the *Neue Freie Presse* lay in its pretenses of culture and standards and its aloofness which appealed to the elite, Kraus also hated the *Neues Wiener Journal,* particularly in the twenties, because he believed it had gone even further than the *Neue Freie Presse* in its abandonment of any standards of decency, probably making the greater part of its profits from sex advertisements. Kraus criticized that paper and its editor-in-chief, Lippowitz, most of all for their all-out support of Johannes Schober, Police Chief of Vienna and later Chancellor of Austria. This was the man who was responsible for the deaths of ninety Viennese in 1927, shot down by the police during a workers' uprising, an act of violence similar to the one later committed on a larger scale by the government of Dollfuss.[1]

Benedikt. The one person who for Kraus symbolized the outwardly polished but actually unscrupulous *Neue Freie Presse* was its editor, Moriz Benedikt. This was true from the first *Fackel,* actually a declaration of war against Benedikt and his paper, until Kraus's death, many years after that of Benedikt. Kraus spoke of the single money-making purpose which drove such an editor and was all the more dangerous because hidden under pretentious phrases. Kraus saw how, as time went on, Benedikt abandoned some of his pretenses and even frankly admitted his willingness to surrender everything to economic gain. The

[1] *Die Fackel,* 820–26 (Ende Oktober 1929), 2ff. Cf. also chap. VI. p. 149f.

example of Kraus's attitude toward Benedikt was typical of his change from a strong dislike of the press to an almost total rejection.

Preoccupation with topics insignificant to Kraus. In the first years of *Die Fackel,* Kraus untiringly attacked the press's preoccupation with the Dreyfus case at the expense of what he considered much more important problems, including a thorough study and *exposé* of the Balkan issues. As usual, however, the press would do nothing to criticise conditions for which *protégés* of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy were largely responsible, as was the case in Serbia with its notorious *roué* king, Milan Obrenovich. Similarly in many *Fackel* issues of the first year, Kraus gave a detailed account of the extreme poverty of the Moravian-Silesian weavers. He pointed out the active part taken by English newspapers in combating analogous situations, in contrast to the frequent wailing of the *Neue Freie Presse* and similar publications about antisemitism, the "disgrace of the century."

Feuilletonists. In the feuilletonists attached to the Viennese papers, Kraus also saw people to whom writing was an easy and profitable way of making a living. With the exception of a few, in the beginning Speidel, Hanslick, Hévesi, and Kürnberger, and later of Peter Altenberg, Kraus despised and attacked them all. In the early years he censored none more than two leaders of early Zionism, Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau.[1] In general, Kraus's wholesale rejection of the feuilletonists was independent of political considerations and was based on his view that they merely kept rearranging old material, thus "baking bread out of bread crumbs." [2]

Békessy. Violent as was Kraus's attack against the literary hypocrisy of the feuilletonists, his attack against personal hypocrisy was even more vitriolic. In the early twenties Imré Békessy appeared in Vienna and began to publish four papers, *Die Stunde, Die Börse, Die Bühne* and *Die Sphinx.* It was rumored that he had been a war profiteer in Budapest, that things had eventually become "awkward" for him in Hungary, and that he had therefore exchanged his Hungarian occupation of sausage seller for that of a Viennese newspaper editor. There was, no doubt, a good deal of truth to Kraus's claim that Békessy did away with the cultural pretenses and niceties to which the press in general still adhered. Kraus was probably not the first person to attach the label "Revolverblatt" (revolver sheet) to *Die Stunde.* It turned out to be brazenly extortionist to a degree not before known in Vienna.

[1] *Ibid.,* 601–7 (November 1922), 31f.
[2] *Literatur und Lüge,* p. 49.

Only very superficially interested in politics, *Die Stunde* concentrated on the sensational aspects of the news, and never took a definite stand on political events. Yet, protected by the Chief of Police, Johann Schober, Békessy became extremely powerful, succeeding, for instance, in receiving from the Vienna police a certificate of good conduct, although his extortionist activities were well-known.[1] In 1926 and 1927, Kraus concentrated almost all of his efforts on the one task of freeing Vienna from Békessy; using the slogan, "Hinaus aus Wien mit dem Schuft" (let's get the crook out of Vienna), and referring to Békessy almost exclusively as "der Schuft," he accused him of corruption and promised him immortality as one of the worst rascals of world literature. Békessy never sued Kraus or anyone else for having insulted him, and Kraus claimed that he had good reasons for not having the courts decide whether or not he deserved such derogatory terms. According to Kraus, Békessy nevertheless had the courts in his hands to such an extent that no matter how often he was accused of crimes, he was never formally indicted.

It was wrong, Kraus insisted, to assume that the rule of the press would perish sooner if its worst representatives, criminals such as Békessy, were tolerated so as to bring about a revolt of the victims. Worse than the continued activity of Békessy were the laziness and moral corruption evidenced in the toleration of him by the public.

In connection with his protest against Békessy, Kraus also came back to his old complaint against the freedom of the press which had increased after the war and made such newspapers possible. Again he exhorted the *Arbeiterzeitung* to fight against *Die Stunde* as well as against other older papers, and not to consider it too insignificant because too despicable.[2]

Kraus identified his fight against Békessy with his campaign for human dignity. Sometimes it seemed as if he felt the salvation of Vienna depended directly on the departure of that symbol of corrupt journalism. Békessy was to Kraus one of the most evil results of the war, and, in his opinion, the post-war revolution had largely failed if it made it possible for everybody, irrespective of qualifications, to write and publish. Kraus himself sometimes doubted the effect of such tirades and continued them only in order to assure his fellow-Viennese that he was not out of breath. He sent to Budapest for documents in order

[1] *Die Fackel*, 766–70 (Oktober 1927), 86.

[2] *Die Stunde* catered to the labor press a measure of self-protection, and in order to distract its attention, encouraged it to fight against he Nazis. *Die Fackel*, 712–16 (Ende Januar 1926), 1 ff.

to show that he was speaking the truth; Békessy had been accused of sixteen different violations of the law, and was also guilty of plagiarism.[1]

After Békessy had been forced to leave by his efforts, Kraus summed up what had happened in *Die Stunde des Gerichts*,[2] complaining of the moral frigidity of a country which would tolerate the existence of a "bisher unbescholtenen Erpresser, Betrüger, Meineidigen, Zeugnisfälscher und Verleumder ...." [3]

... das Gespenst der Zeit ... Nicht die Fakten der Korruption fesseln meine Aufmerksamkeit, sondern ... dass deren Vertreter heute ausschliesslich berufen sind, Vermittler und Erzeuger kultureller Werte zu sein. An dem schauervollsten Beispiel, worin der Betrug der öffentlichen Meinung auf die Instinkte des nackten Verbrechertums zurückführbar war ... erkenne ich im Namen das Wesen, sehe ich im Zeichen den Greuel dieser Nachkriegsverstümmelungen, in der Mechanik aller Sprachschändung sich das Schicksal vollziehen und lache der materialistischen Flachköpfe, die mich immer wieder belehren wollen, dass das Missgebilde der Presse nur eine der Formen der vorhandenen Gesellschaftsordnung sei ...[4]

Kraus had been entirely alone in this struggle; neither the ministry of justice nor the police reacted to his pleas. The various Viennese papers had, to be sure, spoken of corruption in the press but had never mentioned names. Kraus now presented his balance sheet, telling his audience of the thousands of hours it had cost bim to "free" Vienna singlehandly.[5] Sarcastically he told of the *Neue Freie Presse*'s rejoicing over Békessy's departure. It was careful not to give Kraus any credit, and showed its heroism after Békessy had left by planning to investigate his past. Kraus's joy over Békessy's departure was bound to be spoiled when he saw that Vienna had not become any cleaner. It did not even object to the continued tenure in office of such personages as a cabinet minister and the mayor of Vienna, both of whom had been favorably inclined toward Békessy.

Kraus had said in an appeal to Vienna:

Der letzte Funken Ehre, der ihr geblieben ist, um sich endlich des Greuels zu

[1] *Ibid.*, 706–11 (Dezember 1925), 101 iff.

[2] *Ibid.*, 730–31 (Anfang Juli 1926), 1ff. (The Hour of Judgment).

[3] An extortionist, impostor, swearer of false oaths, falsifier of documents and slanderer with a thus far unblemished reputation ... *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[4] The ghost of the time ... not the facts of corruption capture my attention, but ... that their representatives are exclusively called upon today to be mediators and producers of cultural values. By the most frightful examples in which the betrayal of public opinion was traceable back to the instincts of naked criminality, I recognize the essence in the name, I see in the mechanical desecration of language fate fulfill itself and I laugh about the shallow materialists who want to inform me again and again that the misfortune of the press is only one of the forms of the existing social order ...*Ibid.*, 730–31 (Anfang Juli 1926) 26.

[5] *Ibid.*, 732–34 (Mitte August 1926), 44.

erwehren, wird nicht zertreten werden. Ich fache ihn zum Feuer, das die ganze Pest verzehrt![1]

Perhaps such words as these seem extreme when used about a man whom the world in general has never known and whom, no doubt, even Vienna has forgotten. We must realize, however, that Békessy had become a composite symbol to Kraus:

... für die Fäulnisprodukte dieser Nachkriegswelt ... zum Symbol geworden für alles unverwüstlich Schurkische, für alle Macht der Niedertracht, für alles Zufällige, das der Normen spottet, alles Systematische der Willkür und Regelwidrigkeit, alles Gerüchthafte und irisierend Schlammige, für jeglichen Exhibitionismus der Schlechtigkeit und für jeden Schwindel ... ja zum Inbegriff jener wunderbar verkommenen Schamlosigkeit ...[2]

Kraus continued to occupy himself with Békessy for years. As late as 1929 he still wanted the Austrian authorities to have the Hungarian government hand Békessy over to them. In that year he also published the play, *Die Unüberwindlichen*, about Békessy and Schober. More of a takeoff on contemporary events than a play, it uses the method of a play within the play, as we find it in *Hamlet*.

Social Democratic press. Although Kraus was never a Social Democrat, he did see a sharp difference in quality between the socialist and the liberal press. As a matter of fact, he scarcely ever implied that the former was better, but rather that it had a mission and ideals and was merely not living up to them. The same kind of criticism of the *Arbeiterzeitung* was repeated throughout his work. As early as 1900 he blamed it for accepting advertisements from banks, the Danube Steamship Company, and other capitalistic concerns.[3] He expected the *Arbeiterzeitung* to have higher moral standards than the liberal papers and therefore reprimanded it more than the others for recommending quack doctors and printing doctors' advice columns. Kraus realized, of course, that every such concession to the bourgeoisie was a moral victory for the latter. In the later twenties, he pointed out that the *Arbeiterzeitung* had attacked the unfair labor practices of the Krupnik firm while at the same time accepting its advertisements,

[1] The last spark of honor which had remained to it in order to once and for all defend itself against the horror, will not be stepped on. I blow it into a flame which will devour the whole plague! *Ibid.*, 730–31 (Anfang Juli 1926), 32.

[2] ... For the decay of this post-war world ... become a symbol for all that is indestructibly scoundrelly, for all the power of wickedness, for all the treachery ... for all the arbitrariness that mocks norms, all the ... violation of rules, all that consists of rumors and is just iridescent mud, for all the exhibitionism of wickedness, and for every kind of swindle ... indeed the symbol of that amazingly demoralized shamelessness ... *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[3] *Ibid.*, 47 (Mitte Juli 1900), 13.

which used such words as "revolutionary reduction of prices." Just as Kraus believed that there was nothing Christian about the so-called Christian newspapers,[1] so also could he detect little true Socialism in the Socialist press, or little if anything which would not have pleased Benedikt. Even the phrases describing party meetings and the standards of praise of those present were almost exactly those of the *Neue Freie Presse*. In the years 1929 and 1930, Kraus printed almost as many *Glossen* from the *Arbeiterzeitung* as from the *Neue Freie Presse*. He quoted the *Arbeiterzeitung*'s use of such a phrases as "elegant woman" and its expressions of pride because of the visit of a maharajah to its editorial offices. As time went on, Kraus found increasing evidence of the Social Democrats' desertion of that for which they had formerly stood. Kraus was able to show how their press was encouraging laborers' children to read the liberal papers in school, while it assumed that the children would not be harmed by the admittedly evil aspects of that press.[2] The man largely responsible for that policy was Josef Bacher, the cultural chairman of the party, who took his wards to operettas by Lehár and objected to "creating artificially an interest in social problems among laborers."

Periodicals. Kraus felt almost nothing but scorn for all contemporary periodicals, excepting only Ludwig von Ficker's *Brenner*, published in Innsbruck, which he believed to be the only honest review in Austria. Among the periodicals which he despised, he considered only *Simplicissimus* [3] worthy of slightly more than name-calling. In his essay "Der Bulldog" he described it as the "artige Schosshund, der noch immer die Träume des deutschen Philisters in der roten Maske des gefährlichen Bullenbeissers schreckt . . ." [4] Under the mask of artistic modernity it hid its narrow-mindedness which made it, just as did, in Kraus's opinion, the *Zukunft*, reject valuable material admittedly on a high artistic level. According to Kraus, the editors of *Simplicissimus* were anti-clerical only because they considered priests' housekeepers immoral and in their prudishness blushingly crossed the word "*Hure*" (whore) out of a poem by Liliencron. *Simplicissimus* employed as insipid a humorist as Roda Roda, and the headings of its jokes such as *Abgeblitzt* (rebuffed), *Gut gegeben* (touché), and so on, were identical with those of "low brow" humorous magazines. Finally, funny

[1] *Ibid.*, 57–67 (August 1924), 1ff.
[2] *Ibid.*, 852–56 (Mitte Mai 1931), 1ff.
[3] Humorous magazine, published in Munich.
[4] The well-behaved lap dog that still frightens the German philistine out of his dreams in the red mask of a dangerous mastiff. *Die Fackel*, 230–31 (15. Juli 1907), 34.

advertisements blended in with the jokes of the text, thus leaving no doubt as to the purpose of the whole publication. Kraus considered the German humorous papers less amusing and more objectionable than those of other European countries.

The radio. Kraus watched the advent of the radio with mixed feelings, on the one hand hoping that it would destroy the power of the press, and on the other realizing that it might easily take over where the press left off. Kraus wondered why the radio tolerated criticism by the press instead of enlightening the public about it. He came to realize that, while it could be a means of uniting the nations, the radio made itself noticed only by drowning out with dance music the little good music which was left.

"Authorities." When Kraus criticized the press, he often dealt with concrete wrongs, committed by its specific members. Any generalizations about the evils of the press were usually expressed by quotations from the works of famous men having no connection with the press beyond the fact of having frequently been the objects of its criticism. The quotations added almost nothing to the views expressed in Kraus's own words and were obviously used only to increase the authority of his equally violent condemnations.

Power. The Austrian press was actually very powerful, as Kraus saw it, being able to make or ruin anybody it cared to. Kraus was not only constantly irritated by the evil which the press was doing, but was also aware of what a force for the good it could have been through social, political, and cultural criticism. Kraus had no helpers because the reading public had already become so indolent that it no longer understood what a corrupt press it tolerated. As early as 1900 Kraus quoted from Wilhelm Liebknecht's essays:

> Die Presse ist die grosse Fabrik, welche die "öffentliche Meinung" anfertigt, und zugleich der Nürnberger Trichter, durch welchen die "öffentliche Meinung" in jeden einzelnen Schädel hineingeschüttet wird ...[1]

Although the press called itself the interpreter of the people's views, it created their standards and wrote what pleased the greatest number of them; therefore, as Kraus said, the coffee brewers were closer to them than Grillparzer.[2]

Kraus was convinced that the press was running the country, not

[1] The press is the great factory which produces public opinion and is at the same time the Nuremberg funnel through which popular opinion is poured into each individual skull. (In popular belief, one can go to Nuremberg to have knowledge poured into one's head through a funnel.) *Die Fackel*, 54 (Ende September 1900), 16.

[2] *Nachts*, p. 101.

only subtly and indirectly, but in ways which should have been noticeable to everyone. Editors had, in some ways, greater power than the governmental authorities. An editor, for instance, had the right to refuse to answer the government's questions about his articles. This was not the case when an editor asked a government official about a decree. A newspaper had the right to make ambiguous insinuations about its enemies. No one, for example, could defend himself against the untrue claim that a certain letter had been sent to him, for the newspaper could actually produce a copy of such a letter, even if it had never been sent.

When Kraus was very much interested in the revision of the legislation on extortion, it was primarily with the practices of the press in mind. In Austria-Hungary, the person who paid extortion money was considered guilty rather than the one who demanded it. The press, being usually on the receiving end, was rather safe from punishment.

Privileges of the press. The press was involved in such an intricate network of obligations and counter-obligations with the economic powers in Austria that it was almost impossible for its members to escape some form of corruption. Being a member of the press carried along with it certain privileges which had come to be taken for granted. There was, for instances, the matter of journalists receiving, as a matter of course, free tickets to most cultural events. In general, neither sponsors nor performers dared to risk losing the favor of the press by acting counter to this rule. The same custom also existed, although to a lesser extent, in the field of transportation. The central organizing agency which procured such advantages and stood for distinguished acquaintances, prestige, lavish banquets, balls, and "pull" in general was again the "Concordia" surnamed by Kraus "Verein gegen Verarmung und für Bettelei." [1]

Opposition to freedom of the press. Kraus had repeatedly suggested that the press should be censored; he even suggested (probably humorously) that the government should not permit it to exist.[2] The post-war republic brought him yet another disappointment in that the freedom of the press with what he saw as old destructive tendencies became greater than ever.

There was a strong anti-democratic note in Kraus's view of the press. His rejection of its freedom [3] was not so much the result of his

[1] Society against empoverishment and for begging. *Die Fackel*, 291 (30. November 1909), 1.
[2] *Nachts*, p. 126.
[3] *Die Fackel*, 890–905 (Juli 1934, 103; also *ibid.*, (8. Mai 1913), 35, etc.

skepticism regarding the personnel of the press of his day but was founded on the rejection of enlightenment. To him the spreading of information was also synonymous with thinning and thus with deterioration.

"*Totschweigetaktik.*" (Method of killing by silence). When Kraus started out in his career by denouncing the press, it replied by mostly ignoring him. Kraus called this way of becoming even with him "Totschweigetaktik." It gave him a unique position in the world of letters: Although the circle of his readers was large, although he created a considerable stir from time to time in Austrian public life, and although he was the author of many volumes of plays and poetry which would have deserved comment from the press, he was practically never mentioned by it. The Viennese press, with the exception of the *Arbeiterzeitung*, almost always adhered to that rule, and the German papers did so to some extent out of solidarity with their Viennese colleagues. The *Totschweigetaktik* went so far that facts were actually misrepresented. Thus in 1926 the Viennese papers spoke of a compatriot of theirs as being the first to speak at the Sorbonne after the war, entirely ignoring Kraus's lectures there in the previous year. When Kraus had big posters put up all over the city demanding Schober's resignation, he certainly attracted the attention of tens of thousands. Kraus was nevertheless officially not known, and therefore the Austrian Minister of the Interior could speak of a supposedly "humorvoller Aufforderung eines Karl Kraus," [1] when referring to the event.

Kraus often claimed that he did not mind very much not being mentioned, although he gave much evidence to the contrary.[2] At any rate, the situation was advantageous for him in so far as the press could not answer him if it did not want to spread his reputation. Kraus was also able to use this situation in his fight against the press. When certain owners of lecture-halls would not rent to him because they were afraid of the press, he could justly point at the cowardice of both. Similarly, when he gave lectures for the benefit of needy artists, he asked the papers to print notices of his lectures. Under the circumstances, one can hardly be surprised that they refused, as did all but the *Arbeiterzeitung* and *Österreichische Volkszeitung*, but Kraus could again show how their narrow-mindedness was not able even to overlook feuds for the sake of a worthy cause.

Self-comparison with the press. Kraus often compared himself with

[1] Humorous challenge of one Karl Kraus. *Ibid.*, 838–44 (September 1930), 123.
[2] *Untergang*, p. 138.

the press. He proudly pointed to his own fearlessness and to the fact that he was independent enough so that he did not have to take humiliations either from employers or from personages whom newspapermen had to interview. He compared his own success with that of others, pointing with pleasure, especially during the first few years, to *Im Feuerschein*, *Koprophor* [2] (garbage machine), and other short-lived imitations of *Die Fackel*. He also often played the good Samaritan who undid specific wrongs done by specific newspapers, arranging, for example, a collection of money for the benefit of a man who had been harmed by the *Zeit*.[3]

Unfairness and mistakes. Kraus's attacks against the press would probably have been more effective if he had not at times permitted his anger to interfere with fairness. He reprinted a picture of Benedikt and next to it one of the English editor, Northcliffe, the first looking like the caricature of a Jew, and the second very Nordic. In doing this with the obvious intention of contrasting the editors in that manner, Kraus committed the kind of injustice of which he complained when other people joked about *his* appearance. In his anger, he frequently made statements, particularly against the press, which would strike one immediately as at least partially untrue, and would, therefore, also make one skeptical about his other statements. This was the case when he claimed that he had proved the whole press to be unnecessary by filling his lecture-halls without its assistance.

When a newspaper became converted to a view very much like his own, his reaction was very discouraging. Thus in 1922, when the *Reichspost* regretted the brutalities of the First World War, Kraus accused it of inconsistency and reminded it of its much more warlike attitude during the War. Whenever he found two different or opposite opinions expressed in the same newspaper, Kraus again accused it of inconsistency, implying that he had "caught" the paper doing something wrong. Actually it is at least debatable whether a paper admitting more than one point of view would not be preferable to one of which Kraus would have approved in this respect.

Reason for failure. Many of Kraus's critics have asked why he never had the least success in curbing the power of the press, in spite of his constant efforts for many years. In the early days, when he was, as it were, still on speaking terms with the press, he once made a reply to

[1] *Die Fackel*, 131 (Ende Februar 1903), 28.
[2] *Ibid.*, 56 (Mitte Oktober 1900), 7ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, 132 (14 März 1903), 15.

a claim of the *Deutsche Zeitung* that he had not changed anything by all his efforts. He was sure that the evildoers had at least become more careful. At any rate, he was *more* successful than anyone else; the Catholic press had certainly not improved conditions by its method of embellishing Jewish names with exclamation marks. Besides, the press might have grown still more pernicious without Kraus's influence. Such influences, moreover, cannot be measured, and the press could hardly have been more vicious than when in his opinion it instigated a world war.

Clearly, the only role Kraus was willing to delegate to the press was that of objective news reporting. While it is impossible to assess the part Kraus played in changing the Austrian press, he would, no doubt, be proud to see the post-World War II continuation of the *Neue Freie Presse – Die Presse:* modest in claims and format, and insignificant.

CHAPTER V

WAR AS A SYMPTOM OF THE CONTEMPORARY CRISIS

The war as a cultural revolution. For Kraus the First World War had a peculiar place in the history of wars. It could not be viewed merely as an unfortunate event in international relations or the military aftermath of political differences. Nor was its tragic impact restricted to the brutality and sufferings of modern war. It could rather be understood only as the result and most total expression of a deep cultural revolution in which the traditional values of the Western World were being destroyed. The First World War marked for Kraus the final victory of the profit principle of capitalism. Through the utilization of modern technology and the means of mass organization, especially those offered by militarism and the press, this profit principle had conquered the world and destroyed all absolute values.

Destruction of moral values by the profit principle. The World War was the result of the rise of capitalist heavy industry and, more fundamentally, of the civilization it had generated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The idea underlying this civilization, directed toward the one goal of economic gain, was termed "world destructive" by Kraus.[1] It destroyed the world of moral values by their complete transformation into economic quantities and by making profits the ultimate value in every sphere of human relationships and politics. During the war, this political cynicism was to express itself in the indifference of the political and economic rulers to soldiers' sufferings, in the mistreatment of the workers and prisoners, and in the sufferings of the civilian population. Ethical nihilism was to prepare the ground for a war conducted as a giant commercial enterprise which left no room for true heroism. The leadership of the war consisted of cynical men, divorced from any ultimate value and any sense of duty. As profiteers, statesmen, or army leaders, they dealt with individuals as

[1] *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (Wien, 1922), p. 167.

mere quantities to be manipulated in their rise to power. Economic relationships were the bases for political ones; the war was fought for foreign markets.

Corruption in the intellectual sphere. An analogous development took place in the artistic and intellectual spheres; the prime example of how business developed there was that of the press. Advertising and the desire to print sensational news corrupted the concepts of reliability and public service. Similarly art became a tool of commercial advertising and helped direct the attention of the public toward the war. Thus, for its endeavors the capitalistic civilization mobilized the traditional ideals and the culture of society.

What Kraus called the "*Verblödung*" (idiotization) of the people, the leveling process, resulted in a world of mediocrity, the world of the early twentieth century. Quality had been translated into quantity; human relationships, truth, beauty, and heroism had meaning only in terms of their monetary price. In the last analysis, human activity was no longer different from machine activity. The fullest expression of this systematized cynicism was the potentially total utilization of all individuals, their intellectual and artistic productions, the material products of the machine, and the ideals of cultural tradition; this was to be seen in war.

War instigated by profit seekers. Like all other enterprises undertaken in the capitalistic society, the war was determined by the profit principle. It assumed a total character through the alliance of the nihilism of values with modern machines and the involvement not only of soldiers but of the whole population. The war was begun, in Kraus's opinion, by heavy industry searching for markets, and intending to conquer them ruthlessly with the aid of modern war machinery. Linked with heavy industry were the government officials, the merchants and above all the intellectuals of the press who profited by the "techno-romantic adventure," [1] as Kraus called the war. These people went through the conflict without personal risk and without the imagination necessary to foresee its consequences. They used their talents for evading service on the front line and sold their abilities as profitably as possible. For officials and officers, the war offered an opportunity not only for acquiring tremendous power over the lives of vast numbers, but also for financial gain.

The masses as tools. During the World War, the masses were subjected to total exploitation by those to whom they, as well as the

[1] *Weltgericht*, II, 86ff.

enlisted men, were merely tools. They suffered the brunt of privation at home or were chased brutally into battle by officers concerned only with their careers. The line marking the division between combatant and non-combatant was no more. Needless to say, the enemy was treated with the same lack of clemency even when, as a prisoner, he had a right to the observance of international agreements.

Disappearance of heroism. Individual courage became meaningless in the face of the machine. If in the past wars had been tournaments between small groups, they now became mechanical risks.[1] What was sometimes called the death of a hero was merely an unfortunate accident.[2] Whith the aid of the machine, cowardice could be armed; the bomber, the submarine, and gas rendered the attacker invulnerable and the victim helpless. War, which had been a struggle between personally involved participants, became a contest of machines. The moral significance of war was lost, and its tragedy remained. Kraus contrasted the prostitute with the modern soldier; in her fate there was a much more heroic and genuine struggle, for she battled for forces of nature and against convention.

Extension of society at peace. To Kraus the most tragic aspect of modern war was that it could not, as former wars did, end in peace, for it was merely an extension of the state of society at peace. After former wars, fought for definite political goals, hostilities could cease and political settlements be brought about. World War I was not fought on the periphery of society but took place within society itself.[3] It was German society which represented for Kraus the most thorough embodiment of capitalist civilization. The war was therefore not merely a traditional military and political struggle but at the same time a fight in which the remnants of European civilization were fighting against the profit spirit of the machine age. Hence Kraus felt that only the defeat of Germany and Habsburg Austria might still save European civilization:

> Wer würde dann siegen? Hoffentlich nicht jene Kultur, die sich am willigsten der Idee überlassen hat, deren Durchsetzung eben von der Machtorganisation abhängt, zu welcher diese Idee ausschliesslich fähig war.[4]

According to Kraus, there were two factors in Germany which had been

[1] *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, p. 182.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 279.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 672.
[4] Who would be victorious? Let us hope not that culture [i.e. contemporary German culture] which most willingly abandoned itself to the idea the realization of which depends on the very power structure which that idea was exclusively capable of bringing about. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

especially receptive to the new civilization. These were a tradition of militarism and a peculiar philosophy of commercialism. Although more apparent, militarism was the less profound of the two. Militarism as such was merely a tool for power, a tool by which all the energies of a nation were mobilized cleanly and efficiently toward a definite end. Although it also existed in other nations, the difference between them and Germany was that German militarism had gone far beyond its original purpose. It had become an integral part of German civilization and, like Kraus's archenemy, the press, a means to power, serving the nihilistic ends of capitalism. In war time Germany, the attitude of total submission created by militarism had made possible the total recruiting of the nation as well as of individual consciences. The Germans had thus lost an instinct which, according to Kraus, was basic to mankind and existed even in its least free members, namely the defense of freedom of the mind against the autocracy of profit-making.[1] By using militarism, England and France were in danger of being conquered by it, as Germany, and to a slightly lesser extent Austria, had already been.[2]

The other element, commercialism, was extremely dangerous because it did not come out frankly into the open but corrupted by insincerity, hiding under cloaks of heroism and culture. The Germans called themselves a people of poets and thinkers, the people of Goethe and Schopenhauer. Nothing was farther from the truth, for a deep separation had taken place between German cultural tradition and contemporary German life. "Culture," especially in wartime, had become an ornament and a tool for a profit-society. From their culture, the Germans attempted to provide a moral justification for their cynical ambition; Kant's categorical imperative, Goethe, Schopenhauer, and the Christian religion were mobilized to explain the historical and moral mission of German policy.

Pretenses. According to Kraus, this attempt to give a moral basis to the immoral strife for power and profits distinguished German contemporary civilization from that of the rest of Europe. The English, for example, had equally clear profit and power motives, but they at least called a spade a spade. They were no idealists, but

> ... sie sind vielmehr so sauber, wenn sie ein Geschäft machen wollen, es nicht Vaterland zu nennen, ...[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 171.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 169.
[3] ... They are rather so honest that they don't do business and call it fatherland .... *Ibid.*, p. 176.

and:

Ich sage, dass sie es unter den realsten Vorwänden zu tun imstande sind, während wir unter den idealsten Vorwänden auf ein Geschäft ausgehen.[1]

Less important, but equally striking was the Germans' identification of religion with national destiny during the World War. The churches as servants of the state preached the divine mission of Germany in the struggle. The Germans, like the Jews of the Old Testament, thought of religion in national terms.[2]

Danger of victory. A German military victory would have disastrous consequences for German culture itself. That culture had not been able to stand up under economic prosperity and a dominant position in world trade. Thus victory would widen the gulf between the contemporary German spirit and the German cultural heritage.[3]

War against militaristic expansion. To Kraus, the war against Germany was a war for an idea, namely, that of freeing Europe from the spirit of militaristic expansion.[4] Neither the leaders of the other powers nor the other peoples were, of course, aware of the ethical reason for their struggle; theirs was rather instinctive self-defense. One might object that autocratic countries like Russia were on the side of France and England. Russia, however, was autocratic in a different sense than Germany. Russian autocracy was limited to the political and, to a good extent, to the social sphere: it had not, according to Kraus, been able to dominate the fundamental values of life. It still largely limited its control to institutions and, because of its belief in divine and natural laws, still showed respect for the dignity of man. The alliance between the West and Russia demonstrated to Kraus the community of spirit which stood beyond political conceptions and proved the genuineness of the rebellion.[5] There was great danger that this rebellion would fail because the countries of Europe had absorbed so much of the "civilization of quantity." For Kraus, the "Slavic-Romanic rebellion," supported by auxiliary peoples, remained the last episode until all of Europe had imbibed enough German morality and enough universal military service to be destroyed by them.[6]

Prophecy of conquest by Asia. Kraus prophesied the conquest of a

[1] I say they are capable of doing it while giving the most practical reasons, while we go after business with pretensions to the utmost idealism. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 339.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 168; p. 171.

judaized Christian Europe by Asia in the distant future [1]; Asia would one day conquer Europe by employing the same tools as Europe and by throwing quantity against quality. This conquest by Asia (China) would be the only possible liberation from the tyranny of the new German civilization. Countries like China which had developed culturally long ahead of industrialism might perhaps still integrate industrialism into their civilization as a mere tool, which could not be harmful to culture. They might still save Europe by reinstating the truly human idea that God had created man not as a consumer but as man, and had put him into time to have it, not to use it.

Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. Die letzten Tage der Menschheit, supplemented by articles in *Die Fackel,* presented a comprehensive view of Austrian and German society at war. Beginning with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Kraus attempted to record the reactions of the Austrian public until the collapse in 1918. The scene shifts from the *Ringstrasse* [2] to the front, the gatherings of officers, the working-class women of Vienna, the German businessmen in Berlin, and the journalists in luxury trains riding past starved and weary refugees jamming the roads, returning finally to the *Ringstrasse* and *Kärntnerstrasse.*[2] Kraus drew this picture as an imposing caricature portraying the hypocrisy and greed of the mighty and the sufferings of the victims.

Businessmen. In the foreground there were always businessmen, of both the Viennese-Jewish and the German-Nordic variety. The Viennese businessman was invariably Jewish, and from him Kraus derived his often-depicted caricatured view of the Jew in general, a man whose actions were all reducible to the desire for money and social standing. He was to Kraus the personification of Jewish materialism and the product of the Austro-Hungarian world of Franz Joseph, an era of mediocrity which could not successfully hide its shallowness under a cloak of *Gemütlichkeit.*[3] If these people and their statesmen favored the war, they did so not because of the enjoyment of evil but through the utter lack of imagination produced by the age. Besides, hardly any of those profiting from the war had left the world of security to experience the brutality of the battlefield. A further evil was the Austrian fascination with and the desire to imitate German technical efficiency and orderliness.

[1] *Ibid.,* p. 168.
[2] Fashionable business street in Vienna.
[3] Something like "coziness."

Opportunities. In Kraus's caricature, the war also offered many splendid opportunities for social advancement. There were Red Cross relief organizations, hospitals, and bond sales. The prototypes of these socialist warriors were *Hofrat* and *Hofrätin* Schwarzgelber,[1] hundred percent Austrians," whose sufferings during the war reached their climax when they realized they were only in the background of a photograph of a Red Cross meeting.[2] There were also the mourners at the funeral of the Archduke; the new, formerly Jewish nobility, the officials, and the businessmen were all there to be seen.[3]

The German businessman, as seen by Kraus, shared with his Viennese-Jewish colleagues this unimaginative misunderstanding of life. Like the latter, he viewed life in terms of profits. The only difference was that he exchanged the Viennese complacency and yearning for social prestige for cold expediency, pure and simple. He wanted to find bigger and better ways of waging war more efficiently and of drawing extra income from "war sidelines." Kraus created the Wahnschaffe[4] family whose striking outward characteristic was their patriotism, as the prototype of that world.[5] They proclaimed that life had meaning for them only in terms of sacrifices for the fatherland, but they still lived amid luxury far from the front. They asserted that the highest honor for every German man should be to die for the fatherland, whereas for every German woman the greatest honor was being the mother of sons who had died the deaths of heroes. The main purpose of living was to learn how to exterminate the largest possible number of enemy soldiers by the best possible mechanical means. Even the children played at World War. Wahnschaffe's business was built around this sadistic nationalism. He profited from the weapons which were to secure further markets for him and also from "patriotic souvenirs," such as miniature graves of heroes for mothers of dead soldiers to put on their dressers.[6] In general, the appeal to patriotism gave prospective customers a good incentive for buying.

The military. Next to the German industrialists, the German military were the greatest beneficiaries of the war. As Kraus painted the German officer, he was merely another profiteer dwelling in relative security. He, too, lacked the imagination to be aware of the immense

[1] Name containing black and yellow, the official colors of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and also sounding Jewish.

[2] *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, p. 293ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 20f.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 455ff.

[6] Cf. the miniature freedom bells sent to the bereaved mothers of American soldiers who fought in Vietnam by Berlin women in 1965.

suffering involved and enjoyed his own personal power and all the other benefits of war, including the opportunity of showing the superiority of his efficiency to that of his Austrian colleagues. Such cold-blooded military efficiency was personified in Major von Dreckwitz who viewed the war with great equanimity as a rather enjoyable business; he did not even hate the enemy and bestowed on his victims the benign smile of a victor.[1] The officers were vain and haughty, conscious of the gratitude which the fatherland owed their pompous persons. In newspapers and on post-cards one could see pictures of generals posing with serious faces over the military maps, and dozens of archivists were busy producing a book of photographs of the great generals in order to record "die grosse Zeit"[2] for future generations. In Grodno all the girls were required to curtsey before the officers who, as Kraus saw them, were bullies and cowards. He had an officer by the name of Kaiserjägertod say over the telephone when confronted with the necessity of retreat: "Die Truppen sind befehlsgemäss zu opfern."[3] And: "Zum Erschiessen sind sie da. . . . Es geht um meine Existenz!"[4] Officers sold provisions on the black market, thus depriving the enlisted men of food. During retreat, Kraus saw the roads lined with cars moving furniture stolen by the officers, while the wounded walked. Austrian generals even divided newly conquered cities into loot districts.

At the front the soldier was brutalized by his arbitrary superior officers. Partly by the intentional diversion of supplies to different channels and partly out of negligence, they let many men freeze and starve to death. The common soldiers were to them merely easily replaceable personal servants, whose range of activities was delineated by killing, saluting, and dying. The voicing of any direct criticism was, of course, absolutely unthinkable. Some long prison terms or death sentences could be explained only in terms of the officers' enjoyment of cruelty for its own sake.

Rottenness of the culture. Thus in every sphere Kraus pointed out the rottenness of Austrian and German culture as it became especially obvious during the war. Satirizing the members of the various professions, he attempted to show how all absolute ideals and concepts of mission, whether of scientific truth, religious faith, or aesthetic perfection, had been destroyed. Kraus attacked the war-induced "moral

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 247ff.
[2] The great era.
[3] The troups are to be sacrificed according to orders. *Ibid.*, p. 442.
[4] The are there to be shot . . . It's a matter of my career! *Ibid.*, p. 443.

regeneration" (*seelischer Aufschwung*), which was actually nothing but the result of the constant strong effort to destroy all barriers of morality that might have kept the people from approving of the war. This "moral regeneration," which was to pervade the arts and the sciences, preached total mobilization. As Kraus saw the emotional support of the war, fanaticism was merely the courage of cowards. In addition to the ways already described, it manifested itself in such deeds as the demolition of a Serbian barber shop in Vienna [1] or in the erasing of foreign language signs from shop windows.[2]

The unscrupulous and profitmaking press. The Viennese press was the institution most calculatingly devoted to profitmaking in war time; it was the faithful servant of chauvinism, supplying it with all the thrills of sensationalism. In the dailies, Jewish provincialism, Austrian *Gemütlichkeit,* and German aggressiveness were blended into a mixture reflecting the general spirit and in turn constituting the public topic of conversation. The Viennese merchant quoted the *Neue Freie Presse* for justifications of the war, praising it as the outspoken champion of national interest in "the war of defense which has been forced on us." At the same time, being a noncombatant himself, the merchant also managed to get exemptions for his sons, and they found profitable positions in the ministry of food supplies or in the military archives. The *Reichspost* saw in the war a "process of purification," brought about by strict discipline,[3] and the *Neue Freie Presse* attempted to justify it as a war of defense. Its correspondents, Roda Roda and, even more important, Alice Schalek, the woman turned hyena, supplied human interests stories from the battlefield. The basic undertone at all times was the understanding of the cultural superiority of the Central Powers. Fantastic atrocities by the enemy were described, and brutality by the Austrians and Germans was justified whenever it could not be denied. An Austrian actress, upon returning from Russia, was annoyed by reporters and threatened with journalistic reprisals until she admitted that the long trip was tiresome. In *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* this admission was made by the *Neue Freie Presse* into a story of terrible sufferings.[4]

To Roda Roda it was a matter of course that the Serbs could not be measured by "our standards," and Miss Schalek saw in the Serbian lack of pavements and primitive architecture a proof of the inferiority

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 54.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 60ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 668.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 99ff.

of Serb culture and justification for the shelling of Belgrade.[1] The *Neue Freie Presse* was the image of its insensitive audience. Next to an article describing the horrors of war and illustrated by the face of a soldier disfigured by machine gun fire, there appeared a long story about the opening of a new café. The casualty list took second place to the list of new titles bestowed on members of the Viennese elite or on subscribers to the *Neue Freie Presse*. The war constantly supplied new topics for gossip to be exploited by the press. Miss Schalek went to the men in the trenches and asked them about their emotions while fighting. Her camera followed directly behind the front line soldier to record the gruesomeness of war. The producer of a film concerning the battle on the Somme advertised: "Mutter! Vielleicht sehen Sie ... Ihren gefallenen Sohn, wie er kämpfte und starb ..." [2] On the same program was shown a comedy described as being "zum Totlachen" (to make you die of laughter).

Art in the service of the business man. Art and literature had become mere business. The Germans had lost their capacity to distinguish between *Zivilisation* and *Kultur*. *Kultur* rested upon the ideals of life, but *Zivilisation* was founded upon the means of living and the tools of social order and production tending to make life smoother and more comfortable. The Germans, in Kraus's view, made their culture serve their "admirable" civilization, and their civilization serve their commercial ends, entirely disregarding individual happiness and ideals. If the peoples of the world thought that the Germans were cruel, this was less true on the battlefield than at home.

Poetry. Poetry, too, had become a mere tool for war. The foremost poets of Austria and Germany had, for the most part, turned to propaganda lyrics, combining sadism, nationalism, and war enthusiasm into war "poetry." Dehmel enlisted enthusiastically and wrote such poems as *Blutfrühling* (blood spring), showing that all poets had to become "men of steel." Kernstock, Werfel, Hans Müller, Lissauer, and Schönpflug followed suit in the lyricizing of blood and hate. Müller eulogized the German God of Arms, and Alfred Kerr tuned his lyre for composing poems against Roumania. Even Hofmannsthal condoned the war from behind his desk in the army archives. The poet, Kraus felt, had thus lost his seriousness and his quest for ethical or aesthetic truth and had become a mediocre war propagandist.[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 268.

[2] Mothers: perhaps you will see ... your fallen son, as he fought and died ... *Die Fackel*, 717–23 (April 1926) 70.

[3] *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, pp. 227ff.

Science. With the intelligentsia of Germany and Austria, any idea of true scientific inquiry or service to mankind was replaced by service to the war. The German and Austrian intellectual, just like the man of the press, found full moral justification for the war. It was being fought to secure Germany's and Austria's aggrandizement and economic privileges. The universities gave honorary doctorates to all important generals, and the Schopenhauer Society visited naval bases.[1] The chemists found new ways of stretching the synthetic diet.

Medicine. Kraus attacked the medical doctors especially. Medicine had become the science of getting as many men to the front as possible. Kraus had the doctors' convention proclaim that the war diet was nutritious and wholesome, and deny undernourishment as a result of the war. The doctor who wanted to reject a recruit as physically unfit was reproved: "... haben Sie vielleicht Lust, in ein Fleckspital nach Albanien abzugehen? Na alstern![2] Vom medizinischen Standpunkt können's ja von mir aus recht haben ..." [3] Diseases were evaluated according to their effect on manpower, and it was therefore even suggested that the population be forbidden smoking in order to be able to supply more and better soldiers. The physicians were most effectively censored by Kraus through the example of an "insane man" with the fixed idea that Germany was being driven to its destruction by a criminal ideology. Just as he had attacked the declaration of the ninety-three intellectuals as indicative of the spirit of hypocrisy, so he accused the physicians of dishonesty and of the inability to see the starvation throughout Germany existing simultaneously with the wealth of food on the *Kurfürstendamm.* The doctors were told that theirs was a political function. Besides, they were the father confessors of their soldiers and under all circumstances had to encourage them to "stick it out." German science, Kraus concluded, was a prostitute, and the scientists were the procurers.[4]

Education. Education had become entirely education for war. As Kraus quoted:

Zu den wichtigsten Lehren, die wir dem mörderischen Weltkriege ... entnehmen können ... gehört unzweifelhaft auch jene von der Wichtigkeit, unsere Jugend

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 317f.
[2] *alstern,* Austrian dialect for *also.*
[3] Do you perhaps feel like going to a spotted-fever hospital in Albania? Well then! For all I care, you may be right from the medical point of view ... *Ibid.*, p. 543.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 434.

... im patriotischen Geiste zu erziehen, ... schon in die Kinderseele alle jene Keime ...[1]

To mold the characters of the children, toys were devised with such names as "Wir spielen Weltkrieg" (We Are Playing World War), and "Russentod" (Russian Death); and in school they were taught such songs as Lissauer's "Hasslied gegen England" [2] (Song of Hate against England).

Religion. In addition to cultural slogans, religious ones were used to give the appearance of holiness to an unholy reality. The Germans were not the only people who had attempted to recruit God for their war aims: that, according to Kraus, was an international custom of all warring peoples who had lost the total human being. The only difference was that some prayed that God might become favorably inclined toward them, whereas the Germans, like the Jews of the old Testament, took a national God as a *fait accompli.*[3] Priests, rabbis, and pastors were guilty of endorsing the war. There was the Catholic priest who went to the front to bless weapons and to shoot off a cannon. In a chapel there was an altar with a crucifix made of artillery shells. With equal fervor the Lutherans subjected religion to national interest, and on Sunday morning the believers were told in church that the Germans were the executors of divine punishment; in the struggle for the nation the love of one's enemy should be put aside. Thus killing became a service to the fatherland and to God, and Pastor Geier was able to recite:

Wir sind einmal Henkersknechte,
Gott hat selbst uns ausgewählt![4]

Yet not even these slogans were believed in any profound sense. Otherwise it would not have been possible for children to be undernourished and to suffer because of the separation from their fathers, while, in full view of all, the rich lived as well as before and spoke of a total war effort which they did not practice.

Union-smashing. The war, in Kraus's opinion, was used to step up labor output and to smash unions. War-emergency laws put factories

[1] One of the most important lessons which we can learn from the murderous world war is certainly also one about raising our youth in the patriotic spirit ... all the seeds [should be planted] already in the soul of the child. *Ibid.*, p. 605.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 456.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 339.

[4] We are just hangmen's assistants / God himself has chosen us! *Ibid.*, p. 345.

falling below production quotas under army direction, with resultant army discipline and disregard for labor rights. Industry and the military aimed at the enslavement of the workers.[1]

Paradox. Thus the war, which was being fought as an economic undertaking by men unable to grasp the consequences, became the destruction of the life and happiness of man. Moreover, it was all for a cause very far removed from the true meaning of life: "Eine Gattin wird Mutter, eine Mutter stirbt – und der, den's am nächsten angeht, liegt irgendwo im Dreck fürs Vaterland." [2]

Conclusion. Technology, as was seen in *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit,* provided the organizational means by which the total subordination of society became possible for the exploitation of all men and ideals to serve economic-interest groups.

Reason guided by nothing but self-interest was bound to lead to antisocial behavior and to Kraus, war was the supreme case of reason misused. As he saw it, clever individuals, well able to influence public opinion through the press, had come to realize that they personally could profit by an emphasis on sensational war propaganda. They proved to be right, and enhanced their position even more during the war itself. To the indescribable sufferings which they, in Kraus's opinion, had caused, they were just as indifferent as the numerous businessmen, who, protected by the general economic confusion, made enormous profits by means of which they vied with each other in climbing higher on the social scale. The prestige of the military was, of course, even more directly connected with war. Thus the war was, to Kraus, a caricature of modern man uninhibited by former inhibitions and restrictions. Moral relativism, coupled with false values and aided by modern technology caused the world in crisis whose fate had long lain in the balance, to collapse into chaos.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 289ff.

[2] A wife becomes a mother, a mother dies, and the one whom it concerns most closely lies somewhere in the mud for the fatherland. *Ibid.*, p. 633.

CHAPTER VI

REACTIONS TO POLITICAL EVENTS

Limited interest in politics. If, in spite of Kraus's deep concern about the war it still can be said that he was relatively apolitical, it must first of all be pointed out that he did not see in the war the result of bad politics. Both the war and contemporary politics were to him rather symptoms of the same tragic state of human affairs. Contemporary politics, concerned with mere technicalities, was by far the less important of the two. He refused to subscribe to the ideals of any political organization, since he was, to be sure, willing to carry the responsibility for his own beliefs, but not for the proclamations and deeds of any organization. Besides, he did not expect health from curing symptoms; in any political situation, selfishness was bound to be paramount, as long as the basic moral energy on which Kraus concentrated his efforts was not better developed. Kraus retreated only slightly from this radically apolitical position when, at the beginning of the republican era, he admitted that smoothly running political affairs did make for smoother mechanics of life.[1]

In a sense, politics was to him merely noise, gestures, and phrases. The personalities connected with the political movements seemed most tangible to him, and it was according to the former that he judged the latter:

> Ich beurteile den geistigen Inhalt eines politischen Ereignisses nach der Beschaffenheit der Menschen, die es beschäftigt ...[2]

Personalities, as we shall see, mattered more than ideals to Kraus.

In harmony with his role as an independent critic and satirist, Kraus

[1] *Die Fackel*, 514–18 (Ende Juli 1919), 34.

[2] I judge the spiritual content of s political event according to the make-up of the people who are responsible for it. *Die chinesische Mauer*, p. 150.

could not have joined a party, and had always to reserve for himself the right to criticize anyone with whom he might otherwise have been in agreement. He never spoke of political parties except with scorn or in jest.

A shady business. Kraus shunned politics because it seemed to him to be a business in which one could not keep one's hands clean; he never trusted any statements made in the name of a government and therefore wanted to abolish all political symbols and to replace them with symbols of human dignity.

Lack of understanding and faith. He neither believed in nor understood the progress brought about by political action, and showed his disinterestedness very frankly when he said rather playfully:

> Mein Verhältnis zur Politik drückt sich etwa in dem teilnahmsvollen Dialog aus, den ich neulich führte: "Und wer soll denn Handelsminister werden?" "Der jetzige bleibt." "Ah ... Wer ist denn der jetzige?" Ebenso angelegentlich bin ich für die auswärtige Politik besorgt ... Ich halte sie für eine mindestens ebenso vortreffliche Manier, mit dem Ernst des Lebens fertig zu werden, wie das Tarockspiel ...[1]

No doubt Kraus felt that he himself could influence his contemporaries in a more direct way than by politics.

The general downward trend which Kraus saw in mankind's development, included, of course, all political movements, even those of which he still thought relatively well, namely, in the first post-war years, Social Democracy.[2] To him the designation "politician" already implied in itself a partial, onesided view of the world:

> Der Aesthet lebt nicht so fern dem Politiker, wie man glaubt .... Das nichtige Spiel, welches beide treiben, führt beide gleich weit vom Geiste .... Es ist derselbe Mangel an Persönlichkeit, der die einen treibt, das Leben im Stoffe, die anderen, das Leben in der Form zu suchen. Sie wollen voneinander nicht wissen; aber sie gehören beide auf denselben Schindanger.[3]

Kraus's positive ideal integrated aesthetics, politics, and receptivity to eroticism, or form, content, and dynanism into a higher unity.

[1] My relationship to politics is, for instance, expressed in the following earnest dialog in which I recently took part: "And who is to become secretary of commerce?" "The present one is staying." – "Oh well, who is the present one?" I am just as intensively concerned with foreign policy ... I consider it as least as excellent a manner of mastering the seriousness of life as playing taroc. *Ibid.*, pp. 146f.

[2] *Die Fackel*, 52 (Anfang September 1900), 1f.

[3] The aesthete does not live so far from the politician as one might think ... the worthless game which both play leads both equally far from the spirit ... it is the same lack of personality which drives the one to find life in matter, the other to seek it in form. They want to have nothing to do with each other, but both belong into the same carrion-pit. *Sprüche und Widersprüche*, p. 153.

Interest in politics. Despite his claims about the worthlessness of party politics, political affairs were clearly one of Kraus's most important themes, especially in the early years of *Die Fackel.* It was a running commentary on political events. He protested against the political and politico-military cliques and criticized Austria's Balkan policy, her attitude toward the various minorities, and the party politics of the Christian Socialists, and of the Liberals. He saw the most serious fault of the former in their narrow Austrian nationalism which glorified Austrian virtues and evils alike. Similarly, he was repelled by the latter's vague, high-sounding phrases about humanity which merely served as cloaks for defects common to all mankind, defects which thus could rest undisturbed.

Die christlichsoziale Politik, die den Stolz auf die Defekte des österreichischen Wesens zum Parteiprogramm macht. ... Liberalismus, der den Stolz auf die Defekte des Menschentumes vertritt ....[1]

Although Kraus was, as he would have worded it, "opposed to politics" at all times of his life, he did have the insight to predict the dissolution of Austria in February, 1913:[2]

... Und ich habe so das Gefühl, dass die Dekorierung Karpaths das letzte freudige Ereignis sein dürfte, das Österreich erlebt.

Personalities. Among Kraus's contemporaries there were a few active in politics whom he admired and many whom he disliked. In the first group there were persons like Thomas Masaryk, "Lammasch, den Weisheit und Leidenschaft noch mehr als die Pairswürde zieren, ..." [3] Wilson,[4] Bismarck, and Dollfuss. In general, however, being a politician meant, to Kraus, being involved in one more money-making racket, and only great personal sacrifices satisfied him of the genuineness of such a person. What gave him faith in Rosa Luxemburg and in her personality was her heroism, leading her into prison, and her humanity as expressed in her letters from there.[5] He was similarly impressed by Wilhelm and Karl Liebknecht because he believed that they were sincere and had sacrificed for their convictions.

[1] Christian Socialist politics which makes its party platform the pride it takes in the defects of the Austrian character ... liberalism which represents (the) pride in the defects of mankind ... *Die Chinesische Mauer*, p. 153.

[2] And thus I have the feeling that the decoration of Karpath may be the last joyful event that Austria will experience. *Die Fackel*, 368–69 (5. Februar 1913), 17.

[3] Lammasch, who is more honored by his wisdom and passion than by his peer's title ... *Weltgericht*, II, 96.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 176. Kraus speaks of "... die hochherzige und weise Entschliessung des Präsidenten Wilson ..." (the magnanimous and wise decision of President Wilson).

[5] Cf. Werner Kraft, "Karl Kraus," *Merkur, Zeitschrift für deutsches Denken*, V (1951), 112.

On the other hand, those whom he hated with equal violence can be divided into two groups: first, people like Seipel and Körber, whom Kraus believed to be clever, unscrupulous politicians and second, soldiers or ruffians, such as Hindenburg and the emperor Wilhelm II.

What did the people whom he admired have in common? As always, Kraus was interested first and foremost in strong personalities who were, independently of political affiliations, human beings of stature. This stature was, of course, not determined by any objective point of view but by Kraus's own taste.

Very subjective, isolated impressions were enough to win his favor. To accept an individual, Kraus had to believe in his active self-dedication to a cause outside of himself. Then he was able to admire the person to a degree very surprising in as negative and skeptical an individual as he was. He considered Bismarck one of the great men of destiny. Kraus believed that Dollfuss had been put into the world for the definite purpose of saving Austria from the Nazis,[1] and considered him a touching, naively believing little man, almost saintly in his fervent Catholicism, and perhaps comparable to Joan of Arc.

Lueger. In view of his decided antisemitism, Kraus's rather favorable attitude toward Lueger is not surprising. Lueger is usually referred to as the antisemitic mayor of Vienna who payed the way for Hitler's antisemitism and for National Socialism. Kraus started to write at the time of Lueger and died during Hitler's regime. He referred to Lueger frequently but never reproached him for his antisemitic "Christian" Socialism. Instead he merely made ironic remarks about the Jews and the Social Democrats who did not like Lueger's policies. In *Die Fackel* there is only one suggestion of Lueger's cowardliness [2] and the wish expressed that Lueger would have more fighting spirit "... gegen den Wurm im eigenen Lager, mehr Energie gegen Börse und Presse ..." [3] In the early years, Kraus never praised him very highly, but merely agreed with his policies, considering him rather inefficient and petty.[4] Kraus's occasional later remarks, however, were much more positive. Thus he spoke of a "besondere Lebensfülle" (particular vitality) in connection with the mayor [5] and reprinted an

[1] *Die Fackel*, 890–905 (Ende Juli 1934), 263.
[2] *Ibid.*, 10 (Anfang Juli 1899). 1ff.
[3] Against the worm in his own camp, more energy against the stock exchange and the press. *Ibid.*, 65 (Mitte Jänner 1901), 7.
[4] *Ibid.*, 140 (10 Juni 1903), 19.
[5] *Ibid.*, 219–20 (22. Februar 1909), 31f.

article where it was implied that Lueger was a "bedeutende Persönlichkeit" (significant personality).[1]

The emperors. The political figures to whom Kraus was most opposed were those whom he believed to a considerable extent responsible for the outbreak of the war, namely, the two emperors. He therefore concentrated on them most of his hatred in *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit.* Although Kraus had always disliked Wilhelm II, he had thought well of Franz Joseph when he first started to write *Die Fackel.* Later he did not want to admit that, and claimed that as early as 1898 he had been unwilling to participate in the celebrations in honor of the emperor.[2] Whatever kept him from attending those festivities, he certainly had high praise for the emperor. What happened was that in the early years Kraus had uncritically accepted the views of a generally recognized historian, Heinrich Friedjung. Kraus actually quoted the section on the emperor from Friedjung's *Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft in Deutschland 1859–1866.*[3] There the claim was made that all Austrian politics were based on the monarch who impressed everyone as intelligent, extremely industrious, and very learned. He was conscientious and humanitarian, and as he grew older and more moderate, he developed into one of the best rulers of the time. Kraus agreed with Friedjung and praised the emperor as very much of a gentleman, who, being the model of a constitutional monarch, held the empire together. The emperor was a great and noble man who did his duty. Kraus also frequently defended the emperor against those who celebrated his birthday loudly, not understanding that only quiet dignity was in keeping with the emperor's character, as well as against those art critics who dared to criticize the emperor's artistic taste.

When the war began, Kraus's opinion of Franz Joseph had reached the opposite extreme. In prose passages, in a parody of the "Kaiserlied," [4] in a poem, "Das Lied vom Papagei (Song of the Parrot)" and in many *Glosses* he attacked the old emperor as the one principally responsible for the mass slaughter of the war:

... dieser alte Staatsfallot, dem zwar nie etwas erspart blieb,[5] der aber doch

[1] *Ibid.*, 301–2 (3. Mai 1910), 37.

[2] Kraus, wanting to show his old dislike for emperor Franz Joseph, claimed of the emperors jubilee "... das ich nie mitfeierte, schon im Jahre 1898 wurde ich aus diesem Anlass konfisziert" (... which I never celebrated, already in 1898, something I wrote was confiscated for this reason). Kraus must have had in mind an article in a publication other than *Die Fackel* as the latter was not published until 1899. *Die Fackel*, 640–48 (Mitte Januar 1924), 1.

[3] The struggle for predominance in Germany. *Ibid.*, 50 (Mitte August 1900), 1.

[4] Kaiserlied: Austro-Hungarian national anthem.

[5] The emperor supposedly exclaimed after every misfortune which happened to him: "Mir bleibt halt nix erspart" (I am spared nothing).

stets mehr Kaiserwetter als Verstand gehabt hat; ein Hundsgemeinwesen, dessen Anspruch, die Welt mit seiner Mordshetz zu belästigen, ... dessen Mission es schien, als Damoklesschwert über dem Weltfrieden zu hängen ...[2]

The example of Franz Joseph serves not only to show what diametrically opposed views Kraus could have concerning the same person, but is also a crude case in which Kraus, ashamed of a former attitude, denied or forgot that it had ever existed. [1]

To Kraus, Franz Joseph finally was a cynical hypocrite with the appealing exterior of a kind old man, who showed his true nature only when he had brought his people to the brink of ruin. Wilhelm II, however, was always the same to Kraus – a vulgar, conceited ruffian.[2] As early as 1900 Kraus agreed with Wilhelm Liebknecht, who compared Wilhelm II unfavorably with Franz Joseph.[3] Wilhelm was a person who felt so sure of his position that he spoke of things of which he knew nothing and filled his jails with those who dared to criticize. No matter how clear Wilhelm's wickedness and stupidity had become to the German people, and no matter how much they had to suffer on his account, according to Kraus they were nevertheless willing to forgive and forget in no time. Along with the people of the United States, they were willing, after the First World War, to buy his memoirs, which, as Kraus pointed out in the days before ghost writers were taken for granted, had been written by somebody else. Perhaps, Kraus reflected, the Germans even felt sorry for him and for themselves for no longer being his subjects.[4]

The Balkans. Austrian policy in the Balkans was one of Kraus's favorite themes of the pre-war years. He objected to the Austrian government's support of the corrupt Serbian government, which was hated by its own people. Most of all, he concentrated on Milan Obrenovich. Kraus denounced Obrenovich's personal depravity and political unreliability, and the Viennese Court's disgustingly benevolent treatment of him. This leniency had, he claimed, its ultimate source in the liberal press and in the latter's economic interests in the Balkans. Kraus did what the *Neue Freie Presse* neglected to do: he printed

[1] This old state-crook who, to be sure was never spared anything, but who had always had more "emperor's weather" (good weather) than common sense; a very common character whose claim to annoying the world with his murderous fun ... whose mission it seemed to hang the sword of Damocles over world peace ... *Die Fackel*, 502–7 (25. Januar 1919), 5f. *Die Fackel*, 42 (Ende Mai 1900), 19.

[2] *Ibid.*, 640–48 (Mitte Januar 1924). 172ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, 50 (Mitte August 1900), 1ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, 595–600 (Juli 1922), 23ff.; 601–7 (November 1922), 74ff.

reports of starvation in Bosnia, paying no attention to the threat of the Serbian legation to sue him. This does not mean to imply that Kraus thought that the journalist was to fight for the right; rather, as was pointed out earlier, Kraus believed that his only legitimate function was that of transmitter of news. The hierarchy of values underlying their selection was to be necessarily the writer's own. Kraus took his own scale of values for granted, assuming that its rightness should be self-evident to all right-minded people.

He pointed at the prevalent superstitious and inhuman Slovene customs, which proved to him that the Austrian administration had made no effort to educate the local population.[1] It had merely interfered in local affairs with the intention of increasing the tension between Germans and Slovenes in mixed areas. In this connection, Kraus particularly stressed the absurdity of any hints at racial purity, often listing the German names and physical characteristics of the so-called Slavs and *vice versa*. In fact, he claimed that Slovene nationalism was merely an invention of a Slovene bearing a wholly German name.[2]

The Germans. Along with many of his fellow-Austrians, Kraus disliked the Germans from the *Reich* and all the characteristics which had come to be considered *reichsdeutsch*, as contrasted with Austrian. Considering the Germans particularly warlike and cruel, Kraus believed that those tendencies had been strengthened by the approval of them which they believed to have found in Nietzsche's philosophy:

> ... Und in dieser Epoche finden wir immerhin den Übermenschen, das Pathos der Distanz, den Willen zur Macht, die Herrenmoral, die blonde Bestie, kurz lauter Begriffe, von denen zwar die Menschheit um keinen Zoll "hinaufgepflanzt" wurde, die aber ... Schlagworte für eben jenen "Bildungsphilister" abwerfen werden, den Nietzsches fruchtbarste Erkenntnis gezeichnet hat.[3]

What was most frightening about the Germans, especially in recent years, was the fact that they were willing to be made into machines, that they should attribute no higher destination to themselves than that of being precision watches. Their strict adherence, even to the pettiest duty, made them essentially unfree,. Taking themselves too seriously, they lacked the sense of humor which would have enabled

[1] *Ibid.*, 17 (Mitte September 1899), 6.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 1ff.

[3] ... and in this epoch we find superman, the pathos of distance, the will to power, the masters' morality, the blond beast, in short all concepts by which mankind was, indeed, not raised up one inch, which however ... will supply slogans for that very "educated philistine" who was created by Nietzsche's most fertile flash of insight. *Ibid.*, 697–705 (Oktober 1925), 119.

them to view details, and above all themselves, in proper perspective.

Kraus saw no true humor in the comedies of Lessing, Freytag, and Hauptmann, nor in Grabbe's essay "Shakespearomania"; he even called his otherwise greatly admired Goethe and Schiller "Dioskuren der Witzlosigkeit" because of the poor sense of humor evidenced in their *Xenien*. The seventy years of *Fliegende Blätter* were to him the final proof that the Germans had not changed in that respect. Theirs was only a "Humor des Stoffs, nicht der Sprache" (humor of subject matter, not of language), whereas only the latter was true humor to Kraus. To him, Nestroy, Busch, Lichtenberg, and himself [1] were almost the only exceptions to the rule of German lack of humor.

Opposition to nationalism. Kraus rejected nationalism and patriotism; even in his first political essay, *Eine Krone für Zion*, he ridiculed the new Jewish nationalism. One did, to be sure, not need to be opposed to nationalism under all circumstances to take that attitude. At that time, few were able to envisage a Jewish state. With Kraus, however, this attitude foreshadowed the general one he continued to maintain: [2]

> Man sollte sich eigentlich entschliessen, zuzugeben, dass Patriotismus eine Eigenschaft ist, die in allen kriegführenden Staaten vorkommt. Wenn man einmal bis zu dieser Erkenntnis vorgedrungen ist, wäre vielleicht eine Verständigung möglich ...[3]

Nationalism of which he approved. There was only one kind of nationalism of which Kraus approved, and that was the desire of the subject nations of Austria-Hungary for self-determination which originated in the early nineteenth-century, rather than that which strove for self-aggrandizement. As early as 1899 therefore, he remarked that Austria-Hungary should be dissolved, since there was nothing that made it worth preserving, and it owed its continued existence only to the "law of inertia." [4] In fact, Kraus even showed some bitterness over the fact that the Bohemians in Vienna had so little national pride.[5] As was to be expected, therefore, Kraus always sided with the minority in any conflicts between the Austrio-Hungarian Empire or Austrian Germans on the one hand and the members of a "suppressed" minority on the

[1] It should be noted that two of these writers were Austrians.

[2] *Epigramme*, p. 33.

[3] One should actually decide to admit that patriotism is a characteristic which occurs in all warlike nations. Once one has reached that insight, communication might perhaps be possible ... *Nachts*, p. 233.

[4] *Die Fackel*, 6 (Ende Mai 1899), 15.

[5] F. Kürnberger, "Lilis Park in Österreich," *Die Fackel*, 313–14 (31. Dezember 1910), 19f.

other. Especially in the case of the Southern Slavs he repeatedly chastized the Austrian administrators for their cynical treatment of the local population.

Nationalities. It may have been because of his faith in President Masaryk and because of Kraus's own Bohemian birth, that Kraus showed by frequent, though brief remarks about Czechoslovakia that he was especially interested in that country, particularly in the early years after World War I.[1]

The Republic. When the war was over, it seemed that Kraus would support the new Austrian republic and its democracy, although he never adequately accounted for his transition to republican views. We only know that he defended the republic, considering it potentially better than the monarchy as soon as it came into existence.

> ... in der Republik sind die Menschen zunächst so schlecht und so dumm, wie sie sind, aber von keiner Schranke gehindert, den Zustand zu heben. Die monarchische Macht muss, um zu bestehen, die Menschen dümmer und schlechter machen, als sie sind ...[2]

His own conversion to republicanism had been rather sudden, for although he had clearly shown his hatred of the Austrian imperial family during the war, he had never made it clear then that he was opposed to the monarchic system. In fact, in 1913 he expressed himself in favor of a regime which could, at any rate, be interpreted as monarchy.[3] He greatly scorned, nevertheless, all those who had first approved of the former monarchy, and then, after the war, approved of the republic:

> Der panikartige Übergang ganzer Divisionen von Tellerleckern zu Wilson, die elende Bereitschaft, die Konjunktur des neuen Weltgefühls auszunützen ...[4]

What did, however, give Kraus the right to such criticism, although probably not to such wholesale condemnation, were his own intense anti-war activities. At that time, while not expressing himself about any system of government, he certainly condemned the existing monarchic governments of the Central Powers in no uncertain terms.

His acceptance of the republic was, as we shall see, very limited in

[1] *Ibid.*, 838–44 (September 1930), 103f.

[2] ... In a republic, to start with, people are as bad and as dumb as they are, and not prevented by any barrier from changing the situation. The monarchical power must, in order to exist, make people more stupid amd more wicked than they are ... *Die Fackel*, 501–7 (Januar 1917), 18.

[3] Cf. p. 153.

[4] The panicky desertion of whole divisions of bootlickers to Wilson, this miserable readiness to exploit the boom of the new mood ... *Weltgericht*, II, 182.

extent as well as duration. Formerly he had thought relatively well of the old aristocracy, whose breeding and traditions should, in his opinion, have made them superior to other people. Their behavior during the war disillusioned Kraus thoroughly, and he came to set his hopes, however weak they were at all times, on the unspoiled working class which would be able to assert itself in a republic. What must have attracted him to the laborers is that they did not speak the hated language of the middle and upper classes and did, at least at first, not partake of their *Scheinkultur* (culture based on pretense). Yet, in spite of his sincere humanitarianism, he had no personal contact with the working class. In the twenties, however, Kraus spoke several times to audiences of workers, free of charge, and told them, moreover, that we was honored to do so,[1] a statement he would never have made to any other audience.

Kraus felt that one of the first steps in creating a true proletarian culture would be a radical break with the liberal press, but he had little success in his attempt to bring this about. Kraus often used Marxist language but gave it a meaning of his own. In fact, in spite of pro-Socialist statements made even in the time of the monarchy, Kraus was never a Social-Democrat in theory or membership.[2]

Disappointment in the republic. It did not take long for Kraus to become disappointed in the republic. He found in it almost the same faults which he had seen in the monarchy. Kraus saw a republic without republicans, as he satirically described it in *Wolkenkuckucksheim.*[3] Parties had changed places but continued in their petty squabbles. Since the Socialist influence was never quite strong enough to be decisive, the liberal press had, it seemed to Kraus, become all-powerful and had thus actually taken the place of the Habsburgs. Again and again Kraus pointed out the political leaders of post-war Austria and printed their photographs in *Die Fackel,* bewailing the contrast between them and the young, strong proletarians whom he had envisaged in their positions. Similarly he was disgusted by the unproletarian lives led, in sharp contrast to their claims, by the leading republicans. He had come to realize that the driving forces behind the creation of the republic had not been idealistic, and he was therefore pessimistic about its future. Kraus never made quite clear what he meant by political freedom; he knew, however, that no freedom could be achieved by the revengeful

[1] *Die Fackel,* 676–78 (Januar 1925), 67.
[2] *Ibid.,* 890–905 (Ende Juli 1934), 243.
[3] Kraus's version of Aristophanes' *Clouds.*

destruction of values which happened to constitute symbols of the past, by greed, and above all not by any kind of force. In fact, Kraus's love for the Socialists developed into violent hate when he saw that they were not living up to his idealistic hopes, and it was with definite satisfaction that he watched their downfall in the thirties.

The republic did not even betray itself in spirit, for it had none. Paradoxically, the most prevalent feeling of the period was one of mourning for the good old days of the old emperor. The people clung to all traces left from the pre-war period and excessively bewailed the early death of Emperor Karl. In all this they followed the leadership of the liberal press which, although quite comfortable during the republic, had been even more secure during the monarchy:

> ... Denn das fatalste Erbe, das uns die Dynasten hinterlassen haben, ist ... der Fluch einer Geistesverfassung, durch die wir unfähig geworden sind, die Erlösung von ihnen als den wahren Ertrag unseres Leidens zu empfinden...[1]

The masses were unable to see the true connection between their former empire and their post-war impoverishment, and blamed their miserable state on the new government. Kraus, however, blamed the workers very little and merely felt that their leadership did not live up to its task of educating labor politically. Kraus therefore started to speak to the workers himself. This endeavor was doomed to fail. Not only were his political and economic views at cross purposes with those of Social Democracy, but his "interference" was also disliked by the officials in charge of the cultural affairs of the Social Democratic Party. Kraus was bound to fail, moreover, because he had no positive program, except one of vague humanity. He ridiculed and expressed his hatred of political conditions and of labor leadership, which supported the liberal cause by encouraging the workers to expose themselves to "bourgeois" culture. Kraus saw the workers as blank tablets, exposed to bad art and corrupted by it. The "parfümierten Ausdünstungen des Bürgertums"[2] contributed, in his opinion, the largest share toward undoing the work of the revolution. Kraus advocated proletarian culture without ever explaining what it was. He told the workers that socialism was not a matter of party politics, but an ideology which was to affect their entire lives. Kraus's interest lay not so much in the field of general social betterment as in the sphere of human attitudes, the pride and self-respect of each individual as an individual and as a

[1] ... For the most unfortunate heritage which the monarchs have left us is ... the curse of a frame of mind by which we have become incapable of feeling our liberation from them as the true reward for our sufferings ... *Ibid.*, 518–20 (Mitte November 1919), 31.

[2] The perfumed evaporations of the bourgeoisie.

member of his social class. Besides, he had especially in mind what he called "sexual freedom," the emancipation from traditional standards in matters of sex which never became part of the program of the Austrian Social Democratic Party.

He never quite understood the workers' efforts to attain higher wages, or their willingness to spend valuable time electing this or that representative who might fight for or against uninteresting details of public administration. He always hoped, however, that ultimately freedom, of which the Social Democrats spoke and wrote so much, would essentially mean the same to them as to him, namely freedom from interference with the sacred privacy of human life. In order to achieve that freedom, Kraus again advocated limiting the powers of the greatest offender, the press, and the right of the government to interfere with sex life.[1] The clearest proof of the Social Democratic Party's lack of principles Kraus saw, however, in the policies of the *Arbeiterzeitung*, mainly in its acceptance of advertisements of big business concerns,[2] since it supposedly needed the "capitalists'" money to continue the fight.

Antagonism toward Social-Democratic personalities. Kraus engaged in feuds with several of the prominent personalities of the Workers' Party, and consistently attacked others in *Die Fackel.* Among those were especially Oskar Pollak, the secretary of the party,[3] Josef Bach, the *Kunstwart*,[4] and finally Otto Bauer, the theoretician of the party, who played an important part in Austrian politics in the thirties.[5] It seems that Kraus's overdose of personal sensitivity was responsible for much of this ill-feeling.

His honeymoon with the Social Democratic Party ended in a way typical of the usual course of Kraus's affiliations. The disagreement could very well have been caused by an oversight on the part of Bach: Békessy's *Die Stunde* claimed that Kraus had been forced upon the workers as a speaker. The next time the *Kunststelle*[6] of the Social Democratic Party asked Kraus to lecture, he refused, because the *Arbeiterzeitung* had not made *Die Stunde* retract its statement.[7] To make matters worse, Bach revealed his ignorance about the cycle of plays which Kraus was performing over the radio at the time.

[1] See chaps. iv and viii.
[2] Cf. p. 113f.
[3] *Die Fackel*, 811–19 (Anfang August 1929,) 82.
[4] Secretary in charge of culture. *Ibid.*, 706–11 (Dezember 1925), 59.
[5] *Ibid.*, 890–905 (Ende Juli 1934), 179.
[6] Office in charge of cultural affairs.
[7] *Ibid.*, 706–11 (Dezember 1925), 59ff.

Kraus objected to Bauer mainly because he believed that a policy based on Bauer's views i.e. his unwillingness to compromise with the right – would lead to war. In the face of the rise of Nazism, Kraus dreaded this even more than before, convinced that war would surely destroy Western Civilization.

In spite of his negative attitude in concrete situations, Kraus claimed to the very end to be a friend of the Austrian workers' movement. He said he had only come to hate its leaders and to be sorry that the Austrian working class was kowtowing too much to the former aristocracy and was satisfied with so little change since the revolution.

Liberalism and parliamentarism. In Kraus's early years, the two political directions under constant attack were liberalism and parliamentarism. He blamed the philistine liberal system for all the foul acts of big business, for corruption wherever he found it, and for the state of the press and of education. He also attacked the philistinism of the liberals and their pretense of enlightenment. Although Kraus never actually presented a system to replace liberalism, he clearly would have liked government to interfere with the extreme growth of private business. Otherwise, his complaints against the liberal era were once more merely complaints concerning man's nature. About parliamentarism he made frequent satirical remarks, such as: that lies were often told in parliament, that the autonomy it promised was fictitious, that the people were cheated by their representatives in Austria and in many other countries as well. Until the outbreak of the First World War, he probably believed in monarchic rule as the proper form of government, at any rate for Austria.

Any collective enterprise seemed contrary to his individualistic temperament. He was also very skeptical of popular opinion:

> Dass die Meinungsfreiheit eine Errungenschaft des Liberalismus ist, sollte nie vergessen lassen, dass sie auch der Rotz der Kultur ist ...[1]

If he did not expect any good to come from private individuals, he was still more skeptical about individuals' politics. It sometimes happened that, contrary to his views at other times, Kraus advocated that the function of the state should be limited to watching over the press and over the security of the individual and his property. Thus he wavered between the desire to limit the rights of the government on the one hand, and the desire to limit the rights of the people on the other:

[1] The fact that freedom of opinion is an achievement of liberalism should never let one forget that it is also an excretion of culture. *Ibid.*, 374 (8 Mai 1913), 33.

Wer ... vor den Gefahren warnt, die die Entwicklung der merkantilen Meinungspresse für die allgemeine Kultur und für das Wohl der Einzelnationen heraufbeschwört, wer FÜR DIE ERHALTUNG ALLER KONSERVATIVEN GEWALTEN GEGENÜBER DEM EINBRUCH DER TRADITIONSLOSEN HORDE EINTRITT, ... wer selbst den Polizeistaat ... der Etablierung einer Willkürherrschaft von der Journaille Gnaden vorzieht, ... der darf hoffen, dass auch ein Bekenntnis, das manchem unerwartet kommen mag, als unverdächtig gewertet und als der reine Ausdruck innerster Überzeugung geachtet werde. Und so erkläre ich denn, dass ich von dem Standpunkt des Staatsfreundes, der von der Gesetzgebung immer wieder das verlangt, was der manchesterliche Schwindelgeist höhnisch "Bevormundung" nennt, zunächst das Geltungsgebiet ökonomischer Werte betrachte. Dass mir hier die strengste Überwachung geboten scheint, dass ich den neuen Formen neue Paragraphe (sic) an den Hals wünsche und nichts für dringlicher halte, als dass mit den tätigen Zerstörern der materiellen Wohlfahrt des Volkes auch die Helfer der Presse in der fester gezogenen Schlinge Platz fänden ... Aber mit der Sorge für die wirtschaftliche Sicherheit halte ich die Mission des Gesetzgebers für beinahe erfüllt. Er möge dann noch auf der öffentlichen Ruhe und Ordnung, auf der Gesundheit und Unverletzlichkeit des Leibes und des Lebens und anderen greif- und umgrenzbaren "Rechtsgütern" seine Hand halten ...[1]

Belittling of politics, especially democracy. Democracy never had any profound meaning for Kraus. He had written against the proposed electoral reforms of 1900 and had never understood why people took the trouble to support them so vigorously. In 1934, a similar note appeared when he belittled the fact that there was no longer a parliament in Austria.[2] When he spoke positively of Starhemberg, Fey and most of all of Dollfuss, because they were at any rate preferable to the Nazis, he had no serious objection to their corporate state.

Kraus did not object to the democratic goals per se, but to their feasibility. It is very significant that he defined democracy as the freedom of everybody from everybody, and thus found himself confronted with the problem from which Rousseau in his *Social Contract*

[1] Whoever ... warns of the dangers which are conjured up for culture in general, and for the welfare of the individual nations by the development of the commercial opinion press, WHOEVER RISES IN DEFENSE OF THE CONSERVATIVE FORCES AGAINST THE INROADS OF THE TRADITIONLESS HORDE, ... who even prefers the police state ... to the establishment of an arbitrary rule by the grace of the journaille, ... may hope that also a profession (of belief) which may come unexpectedly to many will be valued as beyond suspicion and as the purest expression of one's innermost conviction. And so I declare then that, from the point of view of the friend of the state, who again and again demands that which the deceptive Manchester spirit sarcastically calls "guardianship," I view first of all the realm of economic values. I declare also that here the strictest supervision seems mandatory, that I wish for the new forms to be weighted down by new laws, and that I consider nothing more urgent than that, along with the active destroyers of the material welfare of the people, the helpers of the press might also find room in the more tightly drawn loop ... But I consider economic security as constituting almost the entire sphere of jurisdiction the lawgiver should have. In addition, he might still control public law and order, health and the inviolability of body and life, and other tangible and circumscribable rights ... *Ibid.*, 115 (Anfang September 1902), 4f.

[1] *Ibid.*, 890–905 (Ende Juli 1934), 188.

starts out. But he did not continue thinking through the question, how the maximum amount of freedom could possibly be combined with the rule of law. Instead, he contrasted the freedom of everybody from everybody with the constraint of everybody by everybody. By jumping to this contrast as his conclusion, he saw, of course, democracy as bound to destroy itself. The consequence, then, is his justification of privileges for political leaders:

Die demokratische Idee, die es auf die Freiheit aller von allen abgesehen hat, ist bloss nicht ins Leben umzusetzen. Aber wenn sie mit dem Zwang aller durch alle vorlieb nimmt, führt sie sich ad absurdum. Wie kann ein Beruf, dessen Bereitschaft zu Gefahren Staat und Gesellschaft mit Recht durch ein Vorrecht belohnt haben, die Popularisierung ertragen? Oder wie kann die Pflicht, gleiche Gefahr zu bestehen, auf das Vorrecht verzichten?[1]

Actual distance from the masses. What do, in view of Kraus's political "distance," his expressions of sympathy for the underprivileged or his frequent criticism of capitalism indicate? His sympathy is the reaction of a sensitive person toward suffering human beings. Thus Kraus wanted a higher standard of living for the downtrodden Slav laborers and objected to the inhuman treatment of pro-suffrage demonstrators. At the same time, however, he demanded increased self-respect of the people whose economic position he wanted to improve:

Wien: Der Aristokrat isst Austern, das Volk schaut zu. Berlin: Das Volk schaut zu, wenn der Aristokrat Austern isst. Aber für alle Fälle, damit dem Aristokraten jede Belästigung erspart und das Volk abgelenkt sei, isst es auch Austern. Das ist die Demokratie, die ich mitmache.[2]

His criticism of capitalism is not directed against the system of free enterprise as such, but rather against its immoral abuses, as will be discussed later. Kraus's praise of Social Democracy includes no evidence that he approved of its ideology, or even had studied it. What he sympathized with were the masses of workers. As soon as he thought of them not as individuals, but in terms of a collective, to which he could lend his positive imagination of man, he was able to idealize them and to address them, for example, as "Ihr Braven."

[1] The democratic idea which is intent on the freedom of all from all simply cannot be realized. But if it is willing to accept the compulsion of all by all, it becomes absurd. How can a profession which the state and society have rightly rewarded with privileges for its willingness to face dangers, stand popularization? Or how can the duty to face equal danger give up privileges? *Nachts*, p. 188.

[2] The aristocrat eats oysters, the common people watch. Berlin: the common people watch while the aristocrat eats oysters. But in any case, so that the aristocrat may be spared any annoyance, and so that the common people's attention may be sidetracked, they also eat oysters. This is the democracy under which I am suffering. *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 28.

The Communists. Kraus mentioned the Communists very rarely, and when he did, it was always in the most sharply negative terms. Once he called them a great disappointment to him, for a characteristic reason which had little to do with politics; it was because they played song hits on their radio stations, probably in the Soviet Union. Song hits were, to Kraus, incongruous in a communist state, and therefore just as "wrong" as other bourgeois art was in post-war Austria. This implied that he had earlier had great hopes for them. He was convinced that the Communists' claim of being or hoping to become democratic when they came to power was a contradiction in terms.[1] It goes without saying that he protested against the terror of Béla Kun in Hungary.[2]

The Christian Socials and Schober. As Austrian Social Democracy became less sure of itself and more corrupt, Kraus put the chief blame for its failure on the liberal press and its then main representatives, Lippowitz and Békessy. These gentlemen had come to realize that they had least to fear from the Christian Social Party and therefore supported it. This factor, and even more, of course, the overall political development in Austria, turned Kraus's attention to the Christian Social Party. Of that party's leaders during the period around 1930, Kraus hated most Johann Schober, the Police Chief of Vienna and later Chancellor of Austria. To Kraus, the outstanding fact about Schober was that in July, 1927, he had ordered the police to shoot at the people watching a workers' demonstrations and was thus responsible for the loss of ninety lives. Between September 17 and September 19, 1927, Kraus had answered Schober by a thousand huge posters distributed all over Vienna and bearing the legend:

> An den Polizeipräsidenten von Wien Johann Schober
> Ich fordere Sie auf, abzutreten!
> Karl Kraus, Herausgeber der Fackel [3]

What shocked Kraus as much as Schober's cynical order was the Social Democratic Party's policy of keeping silent about the matter, and the fact that, for example, the Social Democratic spokesman Otto Bauer made a speech in July, 1930, commemorating the ninety dead without mentioning Schober. Kraus was even more dismayed when on that day of the third anniversary, a representative of labor humiliated his party

[1] *Die Fackel*, 890–905 (Ende Juli 1934), 293.
[2] *Ibid.*, 514–18 (Ende Juli 1919), 50.
[3] To the Police President of Vienna, Johann Schober I ask you to resign! Karl Kraus, Editor of *Die Fackel*. *Die Fackel*, 766–70 (Oktober 1927), 73.

by opening the carriage door for Schober, who was visiting the Workers' Home.[1] This relatively small incident seemed to him symbolic of the whole demoralization of Austrian Social Democracy. Referring to it again and again, he made it one of the most important themes of the play *Die Unüberwindlichen*, in which Schober and Békessy are the main characters.

Kraus pointed out numerous dishonest acts committed by Schober, frequently called him such names as "Schuft" (scoundrel), or "Der fidele Henker" (the cheerful hangman), and made many public accusations orally as well as in *Die Fackel*, all of which went unchallenged. When Schober finally replied with a slighting remark, Kraus asked him to appear in court. Schober ignored the challenge, and Kraus, triumphant over this proof of Schober's bad conscience, wrote the *Schoberlied*[2] (Song about Schober), ridiculing the police chief, who had always spoken about duty. It contained the lines:

Zu Gericht
Geh' ich nicht.
Das ist nicht
Meine Pflicht.[3]

This episode illustrates, better than any other, Kraus's fearlessness, and unwillingness to bow to authority.

Dollfuss. I believe that it was primarily Kraus's great desire to have faith in Dollfuss which made him enumerate and contest so many objections to Dollfuss. What is most perplexing about this defense to many who saw in it a compromise, is the fact that Kraus, who had never before defended anyone without being enthusiastic about him, who had always rejected all compromise, regardless of what the cost might be, very clearly and repeatedly called Dollfuss merely the lesser evil, in terms of his ultimate evaluations, compared with Hitler.[4] It was Kraus's exercise of political judgment at that time that made most of his followers feel he had become unfaithful to himself, and that caused them to break away from him. Actually many aspects of Dollfuss's regime, such as the abolition of the freedom of the press, and of democratic institutions were, as we have seen, not alien to Kraus's

[1] *Ibid.*, 845–46 (Dezember 1930), 1f. During the visit, the *Vereinigung Karl Kraus* (Karl Kraus Association) went to the cemetary to honor the ninety victims.

[2] Song about Schober.

[3] To court / I won't go / That is not / My duty. *Zeitstrophen* (Wien, 1931), p. 165.

[4] *Die Fackel*, 890–905 (Ende Juli 1934), 273.

mind. He hoped that Dollfuss would in some way not made clear be able to keep and save Europe, "bis der Zauber der Pest im Stammland abstinkt." [1] Without being Roman Catholic himself, Kraus believed that the opposition of the Church would have more power than that of the freethinkers against those who sang: "Christus krepiere, Hitlerjugend marschiere!" and "Wenn's Judenblut vom Messer spritzt . . ." [2] Differing sharply with those who felt that they had to oppose a Catholic regime if they were not Catholics themselves, he believed that Catholicism would still assure the most humaneness and therefore defended Dollfuss's measures which were accused of curbing freedom or of being inhuman. Kraus went so far as to claim that Dollfuss preserved freedom by abolishing it.[3] He praised Dollfuss for being realistic, for practicing, as had Bismarck, "the art of the possible," [4] and for restricting the freedom of the press far beyond Kraus's wildest hopes.

He praised the Chancellor for his tolerance and courage, speaking of his ". . . courage, passion and objectivity," [5] and his stand as "die mutige Tat des Retters." [6] Kraus felt that Dollfuss was fighting for the right together with Major Fey, an officer left over from the Austro-Hungarian army, a type which Kraus had satirized so bitterly in *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, speaking for instance of the beneficial activity of the two against Hitler.[7]

National Socialism. When Kraus said after Hitler's ascent to power, "Mir fällt zu Hitler nichts ein," [8] he meant it in a more profound sense than would at first be assumed. It was Western Civilization's big step toward chaos and therefore in a sense the fulfillment of Kraus's fears, but it was a fulfillment which took place on an entirely different basis from that anticipated by him. He had clamored against the growth of rationalism which had been threatening to take the pollen of culture off Western Civilization and turn it into nothing but a vicious business mechanism, uninterested in the physical and spiritual welfare of man. The attack of Nazism came from the other extreme; its appeal was to the irrational in man. The nature of its polemics was similar to Kraus's

[1] Until the pestilential magic stops stinking in the fatherland (Germany). *Ibid.*, p. 263.

[2] Christ croak, Hitler Youth march, and: When the Jews' blood squirts from the knife . . . (from Nazi songs). *Ibid.*, p. 183.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

[4] *Ibid.*,

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 240.

[6] The courageous deed of the savior. (In German the word savior is not reserved for Jesus). *Ibid.*, p. 223.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 261.

[8] Nothing occurs to me (to say) about Hitler. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

in so far as it also did not aim to establish rational, objective definitions for words. Instead, the Nazis wrapped words in a fog of emotion and mystery to be understood intuitively and usually only by assembled masses. Much of this they could have learned from Kraus, although his "masses," his audiences, were much more select.

Like the Nazis, Kraus preached the acceptance of intuitively-felt truth, not that reached by analysis. He was convinced that there was only one language, the truth of which was understood by honest men; that language was the testing stone of its own truth. The Nazis, however, proved to him that it was not the quality of truth which guaranteed acceptance. It might not be possible to determine whether the human desire to satisfy irrational instincts or the use and threat of force were most instrumental in giving Hitler his power. At any rate, Kraus had come to see clearly that there was nothing left for him to do since "das Schlagwort der Presse sich mit dem Schlag der Waffe zum 'Totschlagwort,' zum nackten Morde verband." [1] Intelligence was out of place, not because it was opposed to the heroic conception of life, for it was not, but because the time for it had passed. Hitler's way of attaining power had been cleverly calculated but was counter to intelligent responsibility, as Kraus understood it. He knew that he was defeated. He could not even send *Die Fackel* to Germany to console the victims; not only would he have endangered their lives, but he knew that he was a stranger to most of them.

Kraus felt that an era had now come to an end. He had always had some hope for mankind, but now there was none left. Although he would always continue "... auf die unverzerrte Herausstellung von Sachverhalten oder Wertbeständen, auf die Anerkennung ihrer Eigenart oder Sonderheit zu dringen, ..." [2] he knew that the horrible deeds of the Third *Reich* in their full impact could no longer be expressed in words.[3] The misuse of words which had threatened to result in murder had come to seem a small matter in the face of actual murder. Since the world had been corrupted by words, how could words save it?

Das Problem ... ist die Gleichzeitigkeit von Phrase und Waffe, die ... den Dreibund von Tinte, Technik und Tod zustande bringt ...[4]

[1] Schlagwort=slogan; an untranslatable play on words, meaning roughly that the slogans of the press united with the blows of weapons into killing words, into naked murder. Werner Kraft, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

[2] ... To press for the undistorted presentation of facts or values, for the recognition of their peculiar qualities ... *Ibid.*, p. 44f.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 248.

[4] The problem is ... the simultaneity of phrase and weapon which ... brings about the triple entente of ink, technology and death. (In German all three begin with the same consonant). *Ibid.*, p. 142.

Kraus, who had been so angry at the representatives of intelligence, had come to realize that the real evil was its opposite, irrationality,[1] as exemplified by Nazism.

The retreat of Kraus. Kraus was silent for a long time, not only because he was so powerless against the beasts of the jungle, but because he could not speak in his own language, which, so different from that of the Nazis in some ways, had an important characteristic in common with it: neither aimed to be generally unambiguously understandable, but was accessible only to members of groups who had accepted certain basic premises. And he could, of course, not use the language of the journalists, who were still his own enemies. Therefore his renewed literary activity, *Die Fackel*, 890–905, of July, 1934, was extremely chaotic and expressed despair by its very form. He voiced his hatred of platitudes and was still fascinated with the coincidence of mere alliteration, such as that of *Waffe* and *Wort*.[2] When he could still say that he was taking the side of tortured life against capital and against intellectuals, it is obvious that his own idea of the target of his attacks had become extremely vague, or rather that there were no more attacks, and, to him, actually no more target.

What made Kraus's retreat seem unheroic and indeed almost pathetic, was the fact that, quite plausibly in view of his past habits, Kraus was unable to remain silent. Although he believed that the end of the world was at hand, he continued to speak of how he himself had suffered, "Ich habe Furchtbares durchgemacht. . . ." [3] He spoke, too, of the effect which the new political situation had on people's reactions to him,[4] and of his inability to join with the refugee journalists, the very people whom he had attacked all his life, in the fight against Nazism. What that chaotic *Fackel* conveys most clearly is the impression that Kraus had retreated into a realm of fantasy. He still called it that of the word, but he could hardly mean that any more. His only refuge was his active occupation with the works of art which meant most to him, such as Shakespeare's sonnets and Offenbach's operettas; in the make-believe of *Perichole* he was able to find the most consolation.

Conclusion. Kraus's political views formed a part of his critique of contemporary civilization, but to identify him with any movement,

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 143.
[2] Weapon and word. *Ibid.*, p. 305.
[3] I have suffered terribly. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

political or other, would be to misunderstand Kraus entirely. His views were, as already pointed out, conservative. Kraus's statement that his friends had misunderstood him as being of the radical left, whereas he tended actually toward the right, was true and constitutes a key to his politics.

Eine Staatsverfassung, in welcher bloss das abstrakte Recht sich verkörperte, wäre eine vortreffliche Sache für andere Wesen, als die Menschen sind: weil nämlich die grosse Mehrzahl derselben höchst egoistisch, rücksichtslos,lügenhaft, mitunter sogar boshaft und dabei mit dürftiger Intelligenz ausgestattet ist, so erwächst daraus die Notwendigkeit einer in Einem (sic) Menschen konzentrierten, selbst über dem Gesetz und dem Recht stehenden, unverantwortlichen Gewalt vor der sich alles beugt, und die betrachtet wird als ein Wesen höherer Art, ein Herrscher von Gottes Gnaden. Nur so lässt sich auf die Dauer die Menschheit zügeln und regieren ...[1]

He has most often been identified with Social Democracy because of his friendly attitude toward the Social Democratic Party, the labor press, and the labor movement, his advocacy of social reform, and his ardent opposition to many aspects of the capitalistic system. What has rarely, if ever, been noted is his pronounced skepticism toward parliamentarism, democratic government, and freedom of the press. Basically these views hardly changed during the forty years of his literary activity.

Kraus's political position was a reaction against the forces which he thought formed the political foundation of the contemporary technological, mass-commercial civilization. His attitude, the rejection of capitalism and liberalism from the authoritarian right, was not unique in the late nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth, but found expression in a large variety of movements, ranging from Catholic Socialism and corporatism to Facism and Nazism. The aims of these political movements were broadly cultural rather than restricted to the political sphere.

This situation clarifies Kraus's positive attitude toward Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and Karl Hauer,[2] who were intellectual fore-

[1] A constitution which embodied only abstract law would be an excellent thing for beings other than people: but because the great majority of them are highly selfish, inconsiderate, deceitful, sometimes even mean and at the same time equipped with meager intelligence, there results the necessity of a power concentrated in *one* man, standing above the law (and right) and responsible to no one, to whom all subject themselves, and who is considered a higher kind of being, a ruler by the grace of God. Only in this way can mankind in the long run be managed and ruled ... *Die Fackel*, 384–85 (Oktober 1913), 22.

[2] Kraus reprinted in *Die Fackel*, 200 (3. April 1906), 5ff. from Hauer's "Phrasen": Ein Sklaventum ist die Grundlage jeder Kultur und naturnotwendig, ... Ethik ist immer nur ein Nebenher und Nachher, ... eine Bemäntelung ... Die Macht des Stimmzettels ist nur eine Phrase ... etc. (Slavery is the basis of any culture, and necessary by nature ... ethics is always only something that exists on the side or as an afterthought ... a cloak ... The power of the ballot is only a phrase ... etc.). He also gave Hauer free advertising space in *Die Fackel*.

runners of those later movements. Liberalism was the political prerequisite for capitalism, just as rationalism was its intellectual prerequisite. Rationalism made the individual the judge of truth; liberalism saw the free action of the individual liberated from direction toward the interest of the state as the basic principle of the state. Democracy, which saw in every individual an equal numerical unit and overlooked particular qualifications and genius, was considered by Kraus to have contributed to the cultural decline, and to the creation of a mass in the modern sense.

Kraus's antisemitism bore one similarity to that of Lueger and the Christian Socialists, namely the identification of the Jews with the capitalist spirit. Of a similar nature was his opposition to the press, that is, the liberal press, as well as his scepticism about enlightenment. As seen previously, this scepticism did not exclude a movement for social reform, theoretically also found in Catholic social movements. Kraus protested against the exploitation of the worker by modern capitalism. He sided with striking workers and with labor movements, and spoke at social gatherings sponsored by the Social Democratic Party. Yet he shared with Social Democracy only the rejection of capitalism and not the advocacy of socialism. Kraus took social differences entirely for granted. His view of woman too was conservative, since in spite of his eroticism, he denied her any active role in society other than that of a woman. The world which Kraus envisaged as ideal in economic and political aspects was probably the age of Nestroy, an age before the rise of what Sombart has called "*Hochkapitalismus*." Kraus never wanted to see private enterprise abolished. What he rejected was only the overly strong emphasis which had come to be placed on profit-making and the dominating role played by the profit principle in his culture. As against the amorality of that economy and its quantitative view of workers, Kraus wished for the idyllic *Biedermeier* age, populated by little people who, at peace with themselves, lived lives very different from his own.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOCIAL ROLE OF WOMAN

Interest in woman. In the social hierarchy which Kraus envisaged, woman's role was distinctly different from man's. Kraus occupied himself with this problem especially in his earlier years. At that time this problem was in the air; it was a time of intense activity on the part of the feminist movement, especially in Germany and England. Strindberg hoped to find the true unrestricted human being in woman, and Ibsen sought to give her a more dignified place in human society. Most of Kraus's articles dealing with this topic appeared in *Die Fackel* between the years 1905 and 1907, and were published in book form under the title *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität.* All of them were concerned in one way or another with the activities of the Austrian, and especially the Viennese, courts. They were literal reproductions of court scenes, comments on them by Kraus and by the press, and discussions of related topics by Kraus, sometimes predominantly theoretical. By far the most attention was given to sex ethics. In this theme of what Kraus called "*das Allzumenschliche*" (the all-too-human) he was especially interested, feeling that its treatment by private individuals, officials, and by the law was a particularly important testing-stone of human sensitivity and tact.

General attitude. In the Central Europe of the turn of the century, the general attitude toward woman was, in spite of all pretenses, somewhat cynical. At least in the middle class circles with which Kraus was mainly concerned, marriages were contracted with business and social interests very much in the foreground. It was an enlightened, rationalistic society where little hope for happiness could be built on respect for the personality of a husband who was primarily interested in the financial aspects of a match. That such an attitude was prevalent becomes clear from the following remark of Kraus's: "Ob eine Frau ihren Leib für Stunden oder für Jahre vermietet, sich ehelich oder

ausserehelich verkauft, geht den Staat nichts an."[1] Even more convincing are the innumerable marriage advertisements from the daily press which Kraus delighted in reprinting again and again in *Die Fackel*.[2]

Excessive interference. In agreement with Shakespeare, who, as were other literary men, was an authority on moral questions to him, Kraus saw a wall, erected by legal tradition, between good and evil, which did not follow the lines which it ought to follow naturally, because it had to pass the hindrances of narrow-minded ages' insistence on clichés and on hypocrisy. This wall, which tortured man, was erected by eagerness and permitted to stand by indifference.

Kraus was convinced that there should be in this sphere as little interference as possible, that, in fact, the law should protect only life, health, the human body, possessions, and other circumscribable *Rechtsgüter*.[3] Especially in Austria, a state which claimed to acknowledge the existence of religious values, should the scope of the penal code be limited. Those in authority, realizing their own limitations, should try to avoid meddling with matters concerning the human heart and leave room for God to be active. At any rate, the government's efforts to combat "immorality" were in vain.

Kraus's opposition to the public attitude. Kraus, not seeing morality as a *Rechtsgut*, and objecting to any kind of official interference with private life, rejected the "Lex Heinze,"[4] by which Germany hoped to do away with prostitution. If he satirized procurers' advertisements, it was largely because of the hypocrisy of the press which printed them. He was actually in favor of "making opportunities for willing adults" and was only offended by publicly-shown filth, which annoyed the disinterested and seduced the young. He objected very much to a society which robbed a girl of her job because of gossip about her private life, and to a press which profited by rumors, making more money by printing certain versions of stories and by being silent about others. Kraus objected to the police force's prying into private lives and to the National Assembly's willingness to ignore the situation. Finally, Kraus again attacked a public which was perfectly content to let him do all of the "cleaning up." While it was aware of a hundred

[1] Whether a woman rents out her body for hours or for years, whether she sells herself within matrimony or without isn't the government's business. *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität*, p. 281.

[2] *Die Fackel*, 381–82–83 (September 1913) 58.

[3] Rights provided for by law.

[4] Cf. p. 71.

large and small injustices, it cared only for the "exciting reading" they made.

Demand for maximum freedom. Kraus wanted, then, the greatest amount of freedom for each individual, limited only by consideration for the freedom of others. The curtailment of individual freedom was not only naturally and self-evidently harmful in itself, but, by necessitating an increased likelihood of further offenses against the law, it brought about more punishment and hence more crime. In making these statements Kraus leaned on Oscar Wilde who believed that with the decrease of legal punishments, crime would be reduced to a few negligible instances which could be treated by kindly doctors.[1] Since Kraus believed that the treatment and "protection" of morality as a *Rechtsgut* would only endanger other *Rechtsgüter*, it goes without saying that he viewed the individual's sex life as a purely private affair. He objected, for instance, to government interference with so-called perversions and to the current persecution of homosexuals, prostitutes, and procurers. Contrary to common belief, Kraus was convinced that these practices had always existed and that being natural, they always would exist. Like powerful rivers streaming from mountain tops, these activities could not be stopped; and when kept from their straight and open road, they would only go underground. One of the effects of their prohibition was the very real crime of blackmail, with all its trail of torture and financial ruin.

Private and public morality. Kraus dealt fundamentally with two kinds of cases prevalent in the Austrian courts: first, matters of private morality or of no morality at all, of no concern to the public, and secondly, matters of public morality. With regard to the much more frequent cases of private morality, Kraus objected primarily to the fact that there was any interference at all on the part of the authorities and also to the specific methods of interfering. In matters of public morality he saw the same objectionable methods.[2]

Freedom for union of mind and sensuality. Whereas Kraus for instance did not consider parliamentary government desirable,[3] and approved of censorship in view of the abuses of the press, there was a kind of freedom which was extremely important to him. It was, according to Kraus, only in a society where human beings were free to make their own decisions down to the smallest details of their

[1] *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität*, p. 161f.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 8ff.
[3] Cf. p. 245f.

personal lives that there was any hope of true culture. In such a culture, based on the union to the point of oneness of man's mind and woman's sensuality, rested the only hope for the spiritual survival of the Western world. More specifically, elsewhere in his work, Kraus fought for respect and for dignity of spirit, pure and without ulterior motives. In *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität,* his interest was centered around the other pole of his vision of cultured mankind, namely woman and sensuality. For many years prior to the First World War, he viewed woman as the most frequent victim of the injustice of this man-dominated world.

Man and woman. Kraus saw a basic difference between man and woman in their very nature, and in spiritual and mental organization. Woman was to him aesthetic and sensuous, but as a socially responsible and intelligent human being she was somewhere between uninteresting und non-existent.[1] Of the two components of the totality of cultural life, women embodied nature, and man *Geist* (spirit or intellect). Thus woman experienced the world, and particularly man, in an essentially and sometimes exclusively erotic manner, so that her other senses were dulled and her inhibitions excluded. Man, on the other hand, lived mainly through his mind and through his imagination. The function of the physical was to man only that of inspiring and fertilizing the mind. To Kraus there was nothing more despicable than a man who deviated from that norm. All differences had their ultimate root in the sexual:

Dem Weib gibt die gerade Linie die Bedeutung, gibt ihm die einzige Persönlichkeit, deren ein Weib teilhaftig werden kann, und Differenzierung schafft die pathologischen Formen der Hysterie. "Perversität" gibt es nicht. Konversionsfähigkeit ist ein Vorzug des Mannes, ein interessanter Mangel der Frau, ... Das Weib braucht die Persönlichkeit des Mannes, aber der Mann kann die Persönlichkeit des Weibes eher anbeten als brauchen ... Sie glaubt, dass er bei ihr ist, und er betrügt sie ... mit einer Erinnerung. Beginnt aber sie aus Begleitumständen erotischen Genuss zu ziehen, so wird sie bedenklich. Die ewig wachen Sinne des Mannes vermag seine Sinnlichkeit nicht zu betäuben. Phantasie eilt ihr zu Hilfe ... und lässt den Mann aus der vertrackten Widerwärtigkeit Genuss ziehen ... und alles, was ihn abstösst, zieht ihn an. Der Frauenleib ist ein Imaginiertes; real und enttäuschungslos sind nur die Vorstellungen. Phantasie anaesthesiert, macht hässliche Hände schön und ein Weib begehrenswert, das mit der Andern nichts als eine hässliche Hand gemein hat. Aesthetisch wertet nur der Mann ohne Einbildungskraft oder die Frau ohne Sinnlichkeit ... Beliebte Hemmungen sind – O Romantik! das Nichtzuhausesein einer Frau, ... die christliche Sündenlehre und das Strafgesetz. Wer ohne Hemmungen lebt, ist ein Schwein. Wer sie im Kampf überwindet, ist ein Künstler. Das Weib trägt aus solchem Kampf die Trophäen der Hysterie davon ... Aber die freie Sinn-

[1] Only very rarely, as in the case of Rosa Luxemburg, did Kraus deviate from this rule.

lichkeit des Weibes ist der volle Wert, durch den es die Natur entschädigt hat, als sie dem Mann die Phantasie gab.[1]

Woman as the erotic creature. To Kraus, woman received significance and personality only through absolute concentration on the sensual. Differentiation always created hysteria. Woman at her best was, therefore, uncomplicated. As soon as she became reflective, man, whose sensuality does not dull his senses, became aware of this. Man, on the other hand, might betray woman with his own thoughts and memories without being found out. Therefore, whereas hindrances in erotic situations created hysteria in woman, man was able to make assets of any difficulties, such as the Christian doctrine of sin, the penal code, the fact that the object of his love was married, and many other romantic hindrances.

Secondary importance of the mother aspect. Being *the* sexual creature, woman was a wife and mother only secondarily, apart from her primary function. If the suffering of childbirth gave woman a halo, it did so by virtue of its cause which was the origin and center of all *Lebensgefühl* (feeling of life, vital energy). All in all, the mother-child relationship, which has inspired so many artists, was not close to Kraus. In fact, he considered a woman's self-sacrifice for the sake of her child something negative, or at any rate, something very foreign to him. Robert Scheu saw clearly the implications of this attitude when he wrote:

In ihm steckt kein Hausvater und nicht eine Faser von einem Patriarchen, darum ist ihm auch die Mutter uninteressant ... dass ihm der staatenbildende Instinkt fehlt, der auf der Kontinuität der Geschlechter beruht und in Familiensinn seinen Ausdruck findet. Seine Abneigung gegen die Politik kommuniziert mit seiner Gleichgültigkeit gegen die Mutter durch verborgene Kanäle der Persönlichkeit.[2]

[1] Woman derives significance from the straight line. This gives her the only kind of personality of which she is capable, and any deviation from this brings about the pathological forms of hysteria. There is no such thing as "perversion." The ability to convert is an advantage in man, and an interesting lack in woman ... woman needs the personality of man, but a man can worship the personality of a woman rather than use it .... She believes that he is with her and he betrays her with a memory. But if she begins to derive erotic pleasure from accompanying circumstances, she becomes thoughtful. The ever wideawake senses of man cannot be deadened by his sensuality. Imagination hurries to its assistance ... and lets man derive enjoyment from the vexatious, disagreeable situation ... and all that repels him attracts him. The female body is an object of the imagination; only what one imagines is real and without disappointment. Imagination anesthesizes, makes ugly hands beautiful, and makes desirable a woman who has nothing but an ugly hand in common with another. Only a man without imagination or a woman without sensuality has aesthetic values ... Popular inhibitions are – oh romanticism! a woman's absence from home, ... the Christian doctrine of sin, and the penal law. He who lives without inhibitions is a pig. Whoever conquers them in struggle is an artist. From such a struggle, woman carries away the trophies of hysteria ... But woman's free sensuality is the full value with which nature compensated her when it gave imagination to man. *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität*, p. 343.

[2] There is nothing of a *pater familias* about him, and not a trace of a patriarch; this is

Throughout his work and especially in his lyric poetry, Karl Kraus, whom we know as a bitter satirist, gave evidence of his essentially reverent regard for woman somewhat comparable to the chivalrous attitude of the minnesingers.

Limited social responsibilities. Since Kraus was never concerned with the technicalities of making society run smoothly, he never made it clear, not even in *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität,* just how a woman's position before the law should differ from man's. At any rate, he did not expect a woman to make rational decisions; in fact, she ought not even be able to think logically. The same was true of the desirability of a woman's interest in business affairs and, what was even more striking, of her truthfulness. In the case of man's telling a lie, "compelling circumstances" hardly excused him to Kraus except in matters of life and death. A woman, however, was not responsible for a dishonest action if she had merely been promised new clothes or the like in return. Writing at a time and in a place where life in an arranged marriage was usual for a woman, and where she was, in Kraus's words, in a regrettable position between *Arbeitstier und Lustobjekt,*[1] he looked very benevolently upon her unfaithfulness to her husband. In *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität* there is an example of Kraus's attitude toward woman's social responsibility. It is the discussion of a court case concerned with a woman, who, instigated by her lover, burned down a house. Kraus did not consider her guilty, for she certainly could not have been expected to refuse her lover's request.[2]

Wedekind's Lulu. When presenting his views of women, Kraus again took a poet as his authority; no psychologist's way of seeing her would, in his opinion, be correct, accurate, or complete. His ideal of woman was, except for one detail, Wedekind's Lulu, the heroine of *Erdgeist* und *Büchse der Pandora.*[3] To Kraus it could not be true that Lulu danced; a woman who directed her energies toward dancing could not possibly be the sensuous *Vollweib* [4] Wedekind portrayed. A dancer was, in fact, necessarily and counter to popular belief, basically a housewifely woman whose natural instincts were lost in "domestic bliss." [5]

why the motherly type is uninteresting to him ... that he lacks the community-forming instinct which rests on the continuity of generations, and finds its expression in the interest in family. His aversion to politics is related to his indifference to the mother-type through the hidden channels of personality. Scheu, p. 29.

[1] Work animal and object of lust.

[2] *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität,* p. 345f.

[3] Earth Spirit and Pandora's Box. Kraus was the first to stage that play.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 139.

[5] The all-erotic woman.

Character of woman. Kraus said essentially the same things of women as did their enemies, but he said them lovingly. Although he called them illogical, stubborn, superficial, and uneducated, he considered them charming and reached *via* poetry "die vergeistigte Frau."[1] To him she was most perfectly embodied in the actress in general and in the actress Annie Kalmar in particular. Both Kraus and Peter Altenberg addressed poems to Annie.[2] In the essay which Kraus wrote on the occasion of her death he said that the beauty of the woman was the mystery of God by which this world and man's soul became great, profound, rich, gentle, noble, unselfish, and divine. She was the awakener of the "Weltkräfte" (cosmic forces) of man and the only saint; unattractive women tried to achieve the same ends by the unsatisfactory means of the heart and of the spirit.[3]

Opposition to the emancipated woman. Kraus had this to say about the intellectual woman:

> Die interessante Frau und die erotische Posse bezeichnen die geistigen Grenzen der christlichen Geschlechtsfreiheit; nichts ist uninteressanter als jene und nichts trauriger als diese. In ihnen huldigt die Übertretung dem Verbot....[4]

and:

> Solange eine nicht schreibt, bewahrt sie den Schein der Geschlechtswirkung, und der Zusatz an widerwärtiger Geistigkeit, der sie später zur Schriftstellerin befähigt, mag gar die verdächtige Mixtur herstellen, welche die Toren betört.[5]

What Kraus called "charming feeblemindedness" was destroyed. He excluded from his admiration all those women who, in contrast to the *Vollweib*, the woman with greatly heightened sexuality, fought for the political and social equality of women with men, or as Kraus would have said, for "Unnatur" (perversion). They turned their energies toward *Sozialpolitik*[6] because of womankind's greatest tragedy, unattractiveness, with its resulting frustration and hysteria. Thus he spoke of "... dem Weib, das gern zur Urne schreiten möchte und derlei nicht als Schändung ... empfindet ..."[7]

[1] The spiritual woman, i.e. the charming woman seen through the spirit of man.

[2] *Die Fackel*, 3 (Mitte Main 1899), 31.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] The interesting woman and the erotic farce mark the intellectual limits of Christian sexual freedom; nothing is less interesting than the former, and nothing is sadder than the latter. In them the transgression pays tribute to the prohibition. *Die Chinesische Mauer*, p. 333.

[5] As long as a woman does not write, she preserves the appearance of sexual attraction, and the addition of repulsive intellectuality which enables her later to be a writer, may even produce the suspicious mixture which deludes the fools. *Ibid.*, p. 337.

[6] Loosely: social causes.

[7] "... The woman who would like to walk to the ballot box, and doesn't consider this degrading ..." *Die Fackel*, 376–77 (30. Mai 1913), 44.

If there was one thing which tended to reconcile Kraus to the emancipation of women, it was that it had become permissible to show ones' scorn for women who occupied themselves with the dirty masculine trade of writing, mainly journalism:

Gott hat nicht gewollt, dass das Weib sich mit dem brüste, was am Mann ekelhaft ist. Aber es ist ein Weib und sie war als Weib geplant. Und dass eine Leserschaft von hunderttausend bärtigen Tieren solche Bekenntnisse als natürliche Gabe des Geistes bestimmt ... das, das allein ist das Perverse! [1]

As late as in *Literatur und Lüge,* quoting Luther on the same subject, he showed that his opinions had remained unchanged:

Wenn Weiber wohlberedt sind, das ist an ihnen nicht zu loben; es steht ihnen an, dass sie stammeln und nicht wohlreden können, das ziert sie besser ... macht eigentlich auch alle Beredsamkeit über das Weib überflüssig.[2]

Woman and the artist. Prominent in Kraus's system was the striking parallel between the woman and the artist. Both were fortunate to be able to center their lives around the very core of their being; the most ideal relationship possible was therefore that between the woman and the artist. Hence one can also understand Kraus's extreme appreciation of the actress, the woman who could give so very intensively and at the same time enjoy giving. Analogously, there was, therefore, in neither the ideal woman nor the ideal artist any room for egoism.

This basic ability of a human being at his best to be himself and to keep his integrity, as far as his innermost being was concerned, was the center around which Kraus hoped to educate a truly cultured mankind. The fact that an artist might sell his pictures and a woman her body did not necessarily change anything essential. In fact, Kraus even took his stand with the prostitute, and hoped not only to reestablish her, paradoxically as it might seem at first, to regain respect not only for her, but for what was to him merely the reverse side of the coin, the mind of man. It was also from that standpoint that he fought against the ever-growing materialization of all human endeavors, and against the occupation with anything that was irrelevant or counter to nature.

Together with Otto Weininger, Kraus felt that the man of action, as opposed to the genius, had much in common with the prostitute; he

[1] God did not want woman to boast of that which is repulsive in man. But she is a woman, and was planned as a woman. But that a hundred thousand bearded beasts, the readers, should take such professions as a natural gift of the spirit ... that and that alone is perverted. *Ibid.* 381–83 (19. September 1913), 64.

[2] If women are articulate, that is not to be praised; it befits them to stammer, and not be able to speak well, that adorns them better ... and also actually makes all oratory about woman superfluous. *Literatur und Lüge,* p. 24.

was uninhibited and convinced that he was making others happy. Just as the man of action did not care for an inner life, the prostitute did not care to be a mother. Unlike the genius and the mother, they had no effect on the future. The man of action preferred the mother, and the genius preferred his counterpart, the prostitute.[1]

Prostitution. In *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität* Kraus dealt mostly with despised women for whom, as individuals, it was for the most part hard, even for him, to find praise. These were prostitutes, procurers, and other women generally condemned for sex offenses. To Kraus, however, they were the victims and the opponents of those who wanted to "legislate for the nerves." They were the few whom unnatural convention had not yet succeeded in diverting from their purpose. He considered prostitution natural to society, not merely some societies' solution of a problem. In view of the social and material sufferings of prostitutes and of the health hazards to which they exposed themselves, Kraus considered them even heroic. For him, natural, that is to say, promiscuous, relations were, just as was pure activity of the mind, the purest expression of human life. The origin of the stigma on promiscuity and of the insistence on monogamy lay in the jealousy and fears of undesirable women, and even more in the vanity, envy, and selfishness of men. Believing that they could not be expected to tolerate a beautiful woman's relations with another man, they took revenge on the woman who had "the divine gift of enjoying giving enjoyment." As a matter of fact, marketable desirability ranked high with those "critics" and they hid their jealousy behind their indignation. Men were forgiven for whatever they did, whereas women, forced through various pressures to obey men in order to be despised for having done so, were the only ones who were morally burdened in this society. Thus woman [2] continued living under scorn, with the constant realization that any semblance of sexual pleasure on her part would be *tabu*, until finally official morality broke her and threw her into a corner.

The course usually taken by women, the conventional money-marriage, pressed them into a framework entirely unnatural to them. How ironic a situation it was, as Kraus saw it, that the unloved woman should be more esteemed than the loved one, and that money-marriage should be desirable, whereas *Geldbegattung* (mating for money) was despicable![3]

[1] *Die Fackel*, 167 (6. Oktober 1904), 2ff. From Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*.
[2] Kraus here obviously means the prostitute.
[3] *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität*, p. 24.

The first task of the feminists should be to give woman her own choice in sex matters rather than to rob her of it. Did they not wonder why, in spite of all the torture, prostitution still existed, that semi-official institution which simply rewarded woman for what she gave and, in Kraus's view, allowed her in spite of all dangers to lead a healthy, happy life in which beauty often stayed just because virtue had passed? [1]

Kraus often pointed out the hypocrisy involved in the semi-official nature of prostitution. First of all, there was all the corruption and favoritism connected with the requirement of a license. "Houses" with distinguished *clientèles* were thus practically sacrosanct, whereas lesser ones had to cater to the police officials in order to be permitted to exist. To exist meant to take advantage of "the girls" to such an extent that the business could still be lucrative in spite of all risks. Finally, there were the poor widows of officials who could never get a license, and yet whose only means of earning money and concealing their poverty was that of renting out rooms "discreetly"; it was they among the procurers who were usually caught.

The prostitute and the journalist. Kraus frequently thought of the salable woman in comparison with her closest male counterpart, the salable man, namely the journalist, employed by his "madam," the press. Prostitution was not a *Rechtsgut* and should be merely a matter of a woman's own ethics, of no concern to anyone except her companion, her husband, and her God. On the other hand, selling what might be called "spiritual goods" was something that concerned the public and was even intended to have far-reaching results. Since the journalist received wages for work which could not possibly be close to his heart, he was therefore "worse" than the woman who "in accordance with her fortunate organization can perform an undesired sex act." And, pointing to such striking evils of the society of his time, Kraus complained that the wages of the prostitute were still called "Schandlohn" (wages of shame). [2]

Need for discreetness. Kraus was convinced that if people felt disgusted at the very mention of these things in court, it was not because of what they were, but because even the most harmonious private matters when dragged out into the open seem disgusting to eyes and ears for which they are not intended. How much more loathsome

[1] Cf. the German proverb, "Schönheit vergeht, Tugend besteht." (Beauty passes, virtue remains.)

[2] *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität*, p. 638.

was the fact that every official had the right to pry into a prostitute's past! How petty were legal clauses compared with "the organic greatness of women!" Kraus summed up: "Sittlich ist, was das Schamgefühl des Kulturmenschen gröblich verletzt." [1]

Opposition to public interference. Kraus did not accept the argument that public interference was necessary for hygienic reasons. Why, he suggested, not make the transference of venereal diseases, especially by men, a criminal offense? Besides, where necessary, an exception to the physician's vow of secrecy should be obligatory. At any rate, Kraus remarked sarcastically, it was not by prostitution that venereal diseases were spread. Despising a prostitute was counter to the most primitive logic, for if prostitution oppressed a woman's conscience as crime oppressed a man's, she could not bear the shame and the nausea. At any rate, attempts on the part of the state to suppress prostitution seemed to Kraus like those of the three boys who held their fingers over the source of the Danube, trying to keep it from flowing. Such suppression only brought about real immorality, misery, and often death. The path usually followed was: morality – virtue – boredom – syphilis:

> ... und weil eine unerbittlich verzeihende Religion die Tugend den Menschen als Strafe für ihre Laster gegeben hat, sind die führenden Dummköpfe der Menschheit auf die Idee gekommen, die Moral als ethisches Schutzgut zu heiligen. Nun wütet sie in den legitimen Formen der Langeweile und der Syphilis gegen die Menschheit. Moral lähmt, steigt ins Gehirn, schlägt mit Blindheit, macht Natursäfte vertrocknen, Arterien verkalken. Aber nichts mehr auf dieser Welt können wir anfassen, kein Handwerk üben, kein Problem lösen, ohne dass sich der korrumpierende Einfluss der Moral geltend machte .... Und wir sind so moralisch, dass wir ... Dinge, die eigentlich nur vor den obersten Richter gehören, und wahrscheinlich nicht einmal ihn interessieren, schon vorher bei drei Instanzen zu vertreten haben ... [2]

Quotations such as this and the following are also interesting because of the position they occupy between literature and social criticism. This passage is particularly impressive:

> ... in Acht erklärt ist der unschätzbare Besitz der Menschheit an Anmut und elementarster Natur. Um ihn herum ein Stachelzaun, hinter dem die Gesellschaftsordnung beginnt. Aus ihr brechen, wenn's dunkel wird, Scharen der Ver-

[1] Morality is that which strongly violates cultured man's sense of shame. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[2] ... And because a pitilessly forgiving religion has given man virtue as a punishment for his vices, the leading blockheads of mankind have hit upon the idea of hallowing morality as an ethical treasure to be protected. Now it rages in the legitimate forms of boredom and syphilis against mankind. Morality paralyzes, rises to the brain, strikes with blindness, dries up natural juices and calcifies arteries. We can't touch anything any more in this world, practice any trade, solve any problem, without noticing the corrupting influence of morality ... And we are so moral, that we first have to answer before three high courts for things which actually belong before the highest judge, and probably don't interest even Him. *Ibid.*, pp. 287f.

ächter in jenen unheiligen Bezirk. Die aber darin wohnen, führt kein Weg in die Gesellschaftsordnung hinüber. Oft klebt das Blut solcher, die nicht der Stolz des Verbanntseins fühlen können, am Stachelzaun; verachten die Ausgestossenen bei Tage, weil diese sich nachts ihre Liebe gefallen lassen mussten. So bewahren die drüben eine heroische Passivität seit Jahrtausenden gegen die Gesellschaftsordnung, die täglich neue Tücken gegen sie ersinnt. Sie lassen sich nicht aus den Bahnen ihrer Naturbestimmung weisen. Hätten sie wirklich, wie der Moralistenwahn behauptet, ein ethisches Gut verloren, verwetteten sie durch Preisgabe ihres Leibes wirklich das, was der christianisierte Zulukaffer "Seelenheil" nennt, so wären sie wahre Heldinnen der Tat ...[1]

Kraus believed that morality had less to do with brothels than with building bridges, and that it was not the business of the state whether a woman sold herself, when she sued for divorce, or whether or not her desire to do so was an indication of a diseased soul.

Kraus summed up his view:

Fort mit der Schamhaftigkeit, die die körperliche und geistige Gesundheit der Völker seit fast zwei Jahrtausenden untergräbt! Vor allem die geistige. Denn die Natur hat dem Weib die Sinnlichkeit als Urquell verliehen, an dem sich der Geist des Mannes Erneuerung hole. Die Gründer der Normen aber haben das Verhältnis der Geschlechter verkehrt, die habituelle Sexualität der Frau in die Konvention geschnürt und die funktionelle Sexualität des Mannes schrankenlos ausarten lassen. So ist die Anmut vertrocknet und der Geist. Der Frau sind Würde und Bewusstsein vorgeschrieben, dem Mann ein tierisches Sichausleben gestattet. Darum kanalisiert er den herrlichen Wildstrom weiblicher Sinnlichkeit für seine uninteressanten Bedürfnisse, und sein Gehirn geht dabei leer aus. Es gibt noch Sexualität in der Welt; aber sie ist nicht mehr die triumphierende Entfaltung einer Wesenheit, sondern die erbärmliche Entartung einer Funktion. Die Natur des Weibes ist geknebelt, und die Schweinerei des Mannes dominiert. *Naturalia sunt turpia,* und darum stehen die *turpia* in Flor.[2]

[1] Mankind's inestimable treasure of grace and most elementary nature has been outlawed. Around it there is a barbed wire fence behind which the social order begins. When it becomes dark, crowds of scorners break out of it into that unholy district. But no road leads those who live there over into the social order. Often the blood of those who cannot feel the pride of exile sticks to the barbed wire fence; they scorn the expellees during the day, because they have to tolerate their love at night. Thus those over there have preserved a heroic passivity for millenia against the social order which daily thinks up new treacheries against them. They will not be ordered out of the path of their natural destination. If they had, as the madness of the moralists claims, lost any ethical value, if they were really by offering their bodies giving up what the christianized Zulu calls "salvation of the soul," they would be true heroines indeed ... *Ibid.*, p. 280.

[2] Away with the feeling of shame which has been undermining the physical and spiritual health of nations for almost two thousand years! Above all the spiritual. For nature has given woman sensuality as the primeval spring at which the spirit of man may renew itself. The founders of the norms, however, have reversed the relations of the sexes, have laced the habitual sexuality of woman into conventions, and have permitted functional sexuality to degenerate in excesses. Thus gracefulness has dried up, and so has spirit. To woman, dignity and self-consciousness are prescribed; man is allowed to let himself go like a beast. Therefore he channels the magnificient wild stream of feminine sensuality to his uninteresting needs, and his brain remains without benefit from it. There is still sexuality in the world; it is, however, no longer the triumphant unfolding of something essential, but rather the miserable deterioration of a function. Woman's nature is muzzled, and man's swinishness triumphs. *Naturalia sunt turpia,* and therefore *turpia* flourish. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

Kraus's hope for mankind rested on the fact that love,[1] far from being defeated, continued, although spiced by conscience, that "sadistic streak in Christianity." In fact "der Wissende vermag alle Hemmungen, die er als solche empfindet, als erotische Hilfen zu nützen..." [2]

Jesus as Kraus's authority. Kraus was sure that Jesus did not mean what his so-called followers preached. Did He not say: "Woe to you, you irreligious scribes and pharisees! You clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are filled with your rapacity and self-indulgence." [3] "Woe to you, you impious scribes and Pharisees! You shut the realm of heaven in men's faces; you neither enter yourselves, nor will you let those enter who are on the point of entering.[4] The decisive question to be asked about a system of ethics was whether or not it worked. As Kraus worded it: "... lückenlos ist das Gebäude einer Ethik nicht, das ein Naturtrieb in seinem Grund erschüttert dessen Bewohner stets dort hinausfinden, wo der Zimmermannssohn ein Loch gelassen hat." [5]

Conformity with nature. The example of prostitution illustrates a basic characteristic of Kraus's polemic writings. He defended it not because it seemed absolutely desirable to him, but because it was a form which he believed had necessarily evolved, founded on a natural drive. Thus, to condone prostitution was more honest than hypocritically to deny the need on which it was based. The legalization of prostitution would remove the prevalent prejudices against those who practice it. It was always harmful to constrain nature by civilization. In connection with prostitution and in general, he also protested against the illegality of abortion.

After the New York scandal, described in *Die chinesische Mauer*, when a Chinese killed his married white sweetheart, Kraus staunchly hoped that the more sensible code of the non-white peoples who, as he believed, drew a firm line between matters of morality and of enjoyment, would make clear to Europeans the impracticability of their own code. The incident showed, he thought," ... wie Neugierde allein imstande ist, die ganze Arbeit der christlichen Kultur am Weibe rück-

[1] Kraus usually used the word *Liebe* in the sense of erotic love.

[2] A knowledgeable man is capable of using all the inhibitions which he feels as such as erotic aids ... *Ibid.*, p. 343.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 277; Matt. 23:25. Moffatt's translation of The Bible.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 277; Matt. 13:13. Moffatt's translation of The Bible.

[5] ... such a moral structure which is shaken in its foundations by a natural drive, and the inhabitants of which can always find a way out where the carpenter's son has left an opening is not without loopholes. *Ibid.*, p. 283.

Allusion to German idiomatic expression: "wo der Zimmermann's Loch gelassen hat."

gängig zu machen." [1] Kraus saw sex as an elemental force against which man fought in vain: "Auf einem Krater, den wir erloschen wähnten, haben wir unsere Hütten gebaut..." [2] "Wir haben uns vermessen, an dem heiligen Feuer, das einst zu männlichen Taten erhitzte, unsere Füsse zu wärmen ... Wir haben einen Ofen um eine Flamme gebaut. Nun verbrennt sie den Ofen." [3]

The Chinese as examples of naturalness. Somewhat independently of sociological evidence, Kraus believed that neither hetero- nor homosexuality was considered sinful by the Chinese, who were unspoiled by science and technology and were therefore able to play with life, love, and death. To them, Kraus claimed, it was no longer amazing that nature has created two different sexes, one of which did not share men's inadequacy. They lived far from a diseased morality which weakened the strong by prescribing that they protect the weak and therefore one of them could do as much work as a dozen whites and enjoy as much as a hundred.[4] The Chinese, concerned with theory less than white men, were conscious of woman's capacity for sensual enjoyment, whereas white men wanted to make woman conscious of the universe but let her senses starve.[5]

Two kinds of homosexuality. At least as vehemently as he did woman, Kraus defended the homosexual against those who wanted to treat him as if he were insane or a criminal. He explained the view, in his time gradually coming to be generally accepted, which distinguished two kinds of homosexuals: first, those who were directed toward their own sex from birth, and second, those who were homosexuals only occasionally, and by choice. The first kind was beginning to be accepted as pathological, whereas the second was considered a vice and was therefore to be prosecuted. If either kind were harmful it was, in Kraus's opinion, the first. Since it was unnatural for man to turn to men, it was antisocial, because man, in accepting man sexually, denied him as a social and ethical being. This denial, according to Kraus, was man's normal attitude toward woman. Thus a new stream of attraction

[1] ... How curiosity alone can undo all of the work which Christian culture has done on woman. *Die chinesische Mauer*, p. 441.

[2] We have built our huts on a crater which we believed to be extinct ... *Ibid.*, pp. 436f.

[3] We were arrogant enough to warm our feet at the holy fire which once inspired us to manly deeds ... We have built a stove around a flame. Now it is burning the stove. *Ibid.*, p. 439.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 445.

[5] Kraus quite often permitted his imagination to play on subjects about which he knew nothing, setting up theories which had no scientific foundation. Especially typical are his views of the Chinese and of the thoughts, emotions, and desires of women. (*Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität.*) *Ibid.*, p. 445.

entered in. Although it could not be prevented, it could decrease, if there were perfect freedom in this sphere, since here too the forbidden constituted an erotic factor. At any rate, little harm was done by that group. More important was the question, "Who has a right to pass judgment on nature's mixtures?" In this connection Kraus mentioned women only briefly. Since they were sexual and antisocial anyway, what difference could their sexual tendencies possibly make, whatever they were?

Kraus saw in homosexuality by choice the ability to exploit new erotic spheres a sign of a special sensitivity often found in artists and in other highly organized individuals of all cultures. Such homosexuality was based on the overcoming of one's own sex traits, which ordinarily served as the strongest inhibiting factors. Since, according to Kraus, everything erotic was based on the overcoming of inhibitions, it was the more cultured and less pedantic taste which needed more spices, hindrances, and erotic aids.[1]

Kraus was convinced of the existence of homosexual tendencies in every true man who was aided by his imagination as a woman was aided by her sensuality. He was as little perverted as the magnet which picked iron fillings from a pile of wood.

Remedy. Kraus suggested that the situation could be remedied by a public declaration of all socially and politically distinguished homosexuals. Considering the large number of noblemen, artists, and political figures among them, they should carry enough prestige to assure themselves of security.[2] Using this problem as a testing stone, Kraus saw mankind's road toward liberation as one in which homosexuality would gradually come to be considered, first, as neither crime nor immorality, then as something on the level of disease, and finally simply as a matter of taste [3]

Only second-hand enjoyment is perverted. Nothing was perverted except second-hand enjoyment derived from watching other people's lives and picking out the "piquant" or "shocking". In this connection Kraus described as one of the repercussions of the "Riehl affair," a women's meeting in protest against bad conditions in a house of prostitution. Kraus inquired what accounted for the fact that the hall was filled in no time with a mad, shouting crowd. The audience enjoyed their superiority over and disgust with Mrs. Riehl's "prisoners," the

[1] Cf. Freud's concept of sublimation.
[2] *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität*, p. 10.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

prostitutes. Kraus who was, a usual, shocked by the tactlessness of the hypocritical mob, called the whole episode a "sex orgy" and termed the motive force in those women "*die Moralbestie.*" [1]

To Kraus, much more despicable than a woman who had lost all femininity was the hypocritical male. He sullied in the open that which he desired in the dark and tried to establish a value standard for women which he himself aimed to destroy. "Es ist nicht wahr," Kraus exclaimed, "dass die Menschen den Ursprung ihres Werdens und den Quell ihrer Glückseligkeit fliehen ..." [2]

Conclusion. Kraus's revolt against convention in this sphere concentrated on the destruction of the barriers to the full sensual expression of women. This implied a negation of the traditional standards of sexual conduct and of the family. On the other hand, the position which Kraus gave women in political, social, and intellectual life corresponded to the opinion prevailing prior to, and outside of the feminist movement. It denied woman any participation in the intellectual and artistic realms. Kraus's formula of the equilibrium of man's mind and woman's sensuality might sound like a plea for equality, except for the fact that he placed his main emphasis on the view that woman's main function was that of inspiring man.

[1] The beast morality. *Ibid.*, pp. 256ff.

[2] It isn't true, ... that men flee from the origin of their being, and from the source of their bliss .... *Ibid.*, p. 166.

CHAPTER VIII

THE JEWISH PROBLEM

Kraus's Jewishness and relationship to his Jewish contemporaries occupied a very prominent place in his thinking. The core of what is, in the twentieth century, usually called "the Jewish problem," is closely related to the very fact that most people who are called Jews either by themselves or by others are very much aware of that often intangible Jewishness. In our age this may be partly due to their oversensitivity to factors insignificant in themselves, but no doubt has its ultimate origin in the attitude of a sufficient proportion of non-Jewish contemporaries. Subsidiary questions arising out of this awareness will be discussed here in so far as Kraus was concerned with them. For this it will be necessary to take at least a brief look at the the Jewish world which he criticized.

The historical situation. With one short break the Liberals had governed Austria from 1867 until 1879; it had been a time of considerable material progress from which the Jews, most of whom had immigrated into Austria since 1860, benefited more than any other group. In Kraus's life-time, the Jews were nevertheless a small minority, comprising three and seven-tenths per cent of the population of German-speaking Austria; even in Vienna, where most of them lived, they made up only ten per cent. They did, however, play a decisive part in almost all phases of public life. Opportunities were especially great for them because of the numerical weakness of the native bourgeoisie. Much more powerful than the Jews in Germany, at the time of Kraus they controlled most of the banks in Austria. After the War, eighty per cent of the lawyers in Vienna were Jews; they also held a strong position in medicine and a dominating one in journalism. In the arts the influence of the Jews was also quite out of proportion to their total numbers.[1] The Jews even played a certain part in the imperial

[1] Fritz Borkenau, *Austria and After.*

administration; a striking example was that of Rudolf Sieghart,[1] the son of a poor Jew from Troppau, who finally rose to the position of right-hand-man to Prime Minister Körber, the man who financed the *Heimwehren* [2] after the War.

If the Jews rose to high positions, it was not because the people wanted them to rise, but rather because the Imperial Government had little choice.[3] Much of the population of Austria-Hungary, and even of Vienna, consisted of various Slavs, Hungarians, and, to a lesser extent, Italians, who were less and less loyal to the house of Habsburg as time went on. Moreover, among the German-speaking Austrians, a large percentage of whom were peasants and mountaineers, there were not enough potential officials. Thus, some important posts were given to Jews in spite of much antisemitism in high places. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand d'Este, who was becoming the real ruler of the country, was known to be an antisemite;[4] Georg Schönerer [5] and Karl Lueger [6] were also already thought of as violently antisemitic, although they were mildly so in the light of later events. How strong antisemitism was in academic circles can, according to Franz Borkenau, be seen from the striking fact that Freud never became a full professor at the University of Vienna.[7]

Jews were strangers. No matter how assimilated he might be, the Viennese Jew of the *haute bourgeoisie* always felt somewhat of a stranger in Austria, and was also thought of as a stranger. He was in a position somewhere between that of a Jew of Western and the Jew of Eastern Europe and with all his wealth and cultural superiority never reached a well-defined position. In retrospect, the danger involved in this position seems clear.[8]

Antisemitism. It was the Vienna of this time which nursed and possibly originated the antisemitism of Hitler. He did not create his own brand of antisemitism, but rather only intensified what already existed in Austria, where it had been part of the platform of the Christian Social Party since 1880.

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 102ff.

[2] *Heimwehren:* the antisemitic citizens' army made up of members of the Christian Social Party.

[3] Borkenau, *op. cit.*, pp. 101f.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

[5] Georg Ritter von Schönerer, 1842–1921; Austrian statesman and German nationalist. Since 1873 a member of the Chamber of Deputies.

[6] Karl Lueger, mayor of Vienna at the turn of the century.

[7] Borkenau, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

The superstitious belief in ritual murder,[1] very much alive somewhat more to the East, helped to rouse the Jews from their feeling of relative security when the Jewish peddler Hilsner, of Polička in Bohemia, was actually tried for such an alleged murder. The Dreyfus affair, of about the same time, alarmed them even more.

Attempts at a solution. It was then, at the turn of the century, that the Zionist movement originated. It was founded by the former assimilationist Theodor Herzl, feuilletonist and later Paris correspondent of the *Neue Freie Presse.* He was aided by such men as Max Nordau, formerly Südfeld as Kraus gleefully pointed out, for the purpose of founding a home in Palestine for Jews scattered all over the world. This was for a long time a small, much ridiculed movement. At that time, more Jews by far, especially in Vienna, chose an entirely different way out, namely conversion. Many from the ranks of the intelligentsia, artists, and big business went over to Catholicism.[2] It was, of course, only rarely that those new Catholics actually became Catholics in any real sense. Their conversion was rather usually understood and accepted as a formality, intended to pave the way to certain social circles, to open the door to an officer's career for the son of the new Catholic, or in general to "make things easier for the children." Many of these converts led a rather comfortable existence, satisfied with the outward success of their step and annoyed only occasionally by the barriers which remained in spite of their baptismal certificates. There were, however, others, to whom, although they may have been very assimilated, Schaukal's words applied:

> ... wenn jeder Mensch in seinem Blute seine Toten beherbergt, hat der heimatlose Gast aller Völker in den Vorfahren auch seinen verlorenen Boden geborgen. Landnot hat in ihm das Erbe erstärkt ...[3]

Der jüdische Selbsthass.[4] There must have been many who came to hate the Jewish environment of their origin and were tortured by the thought of being considered part of it, even to a small degree. In a book by the same title, Theodor Lessing called this phenomenon "der jüdische Selbsthass," and explained it with examples of several outstanding young Jews, all coming from environments similar to Kraus's and

[1] The belief, subject to variations, that Jews needed the blood of an innocent Christian maiden to bake *Mazzoth* (Jewish Easter bread.)

[2] In Austria-Hungary, conversion to Christianity practically always meant conversion to Catholicism.

[3] ... If every man harbors his dead in his blood, then the homeless guest of all peoples shelters in his ancestors his lost soil also. Landlessness has intensified the inheritance in him. Richard Schaukal, *Karl Kraus* (Wien, 1933), p. 22.

[4] Jewish self-hatred.

living at the same time. They all brooded over that problem, and most of them temporarily found what they believed was an acceptable way of viewing their situation. Arthur Trebitsch, a handsome, tall and fair-haired yound man, arrived at racial theories very much like those of H. S. Chamberlain; but he probably never felt quite safe, as he developed a persecution complex and finally went mad. The chemist Max Steiner and the poet Walter Calé committed suicide; Paul Rée, the philosopher, after having been rejected by his former friend, Nietzsche, went to the country to give medical aid to the poor; Theodor Lessing suggests that his fatal fall from a precipice, which was probably not accidental, can be traced back to the same self-hatred.[1] The most interesting of Lessing's group was Otto Weininger. In his book, *Geschlecht und Charakter*,[2] he expounded his views of the essentially feminine character of the Jews and of the basically evil character of sex, of everything feminine, and therefore also of the Jews. Consistently with his views, he committed suicide.

Kraus and his Jewishness. Lessing called Kraus the most shining example of Jewish self-hate.[3] At any rate, the Jews and their problems were among the most constant themes of Kraus's publicistic activity. His first independent pamphlet, *Die demolierte Literatur* (1897), dealt with a largely Jewish group, the literary clique which used to congregate at the *Café Griensteidl.* His second brochure, *Eine Krone für Zion* (1898), ridiculed Herzl's Zionist movement. In all the thirty-seven years of *Die Fackel* there was hardly an issue which did not contain a gloss poking fun at a Jewish journalist's language. Yet when Kraus "went to pieces" in 1933 and 1934, it was the cynicism of the Nazi regime which caused his breakdown. Kraus's tragic position was described by Otto Forst-Battaglia:

> ... gehasst, gefürchtet, beschimpft, doch heimlich beneidet, von den Juden als "Besudler des eigenen Nestes" verabscheut, von den Judengegnern abgelehnt, da doch "niemand aus seiner Rasse heraustreten könne" ... erfüllte Karl Kraus ... seine Sendung: die Augiasställe auszumisten ...[4]

Parallel with the rest of Kraus's development, his discussion of his own position became more and more general, expressed in more and more

[1] Theodor Lessing, *Der jüdische Selbsthass*, Berlin, 1930.

[2] (Sex and Character).

[3] Theodor Lessing, pp. 43f.

[4] ... Hated, feared, called names, but secretly envied, detested by the Jews as "one who soils his own nest," rejected by the antisemites since, as they claim, nobody can shed his race ... Kraus fulfilled his mission: to clean out the stables of Augeas (the stables which according to Greek legend Hercules cleaned). Otto Forst-Battaglia, *Deutsche Prosa seit dem Weltkrieg. Dichtung und Denken* (Leipzig, 1933), p. 515. (German Prose Since the World War. Belles-lettres and Thought).

veiled language until, toward the end, there were only cryptic hints from which one could conjecture. In the course of time, his attitude towards the Jews also changed to some extent. In the thirties he was even willing to mediate donations for Palestine in *Die Fackel.* He was probably never quite sure what to think of the racial problem. In *Untergang der Welt durch die schwarze Magie* Kraus told most completely how he though of himself as a Jew:

Meine Unbildung bringt es mit sich, dass ich über das Rassenproblem kaum so viel auszusagen wüsste, als notwendig ist, um in einem halbwegs anständigen Kegelklub, der auf sich hält, noch für einen intelligenten Menschen zu gelten ... dass man auch aus dem Leben nicht austreten kann, wenn man sich auch umbringt, und dass man, ohne sich umzubringen, jenes höhere Leben des Geistes führen kann, dem man doch rettungslos verfallen wäre, wenn man sich umbrächte. So glaube ich wohl, dass man auch innerhalb der Rasse jenen höheren Zustand bewähren mag, der einmal keiner Rasse versagt war oder der, ihr einmal erreichbar, sie nie unerträglich gemacht hätte. Und so ist es mir wohl auch möglich, Eigenschaften zu hassen, die ich auf jenem Stand der Judenheit, wo sie sich noch nicht von Gott selbständig gemacht hatte, vergebens suchen würde. Dagegen zu behaupten ... dass ich ... wie aus der Erschütterung eines Offenbarungserlebnisses spüre, dass mir nichts von allen den Eigenschaften der Juden anhaftet, die wir nach dem heutigen Stand der jüdischen Dinge einverständlich feststellen wollen. Wenn wir aber auch zugeben, dass hundert Jahrgänge sämtlicher antisemitischer Drucksorten ein elendes Stammeln sind neben der Sprache, die eine einzige Glosse der Fackel spricht, so wollen wir doch der Tendenz solchen Judenhasses die Ehre lassen, dass sie zu einem Ursprung strebt und nie zu einem Ziel ...[1]

He continues:

... Und weiss dabei nicht, ob es eine jüdische Eigenschaft ist, an jeden Atemzug, den ein Gedanke braucht, um ein Wort zu werden, so viel Leidenschaft und Weltentbehrung zu wenden, dass man es einem Werk von fünfzehn Jahren nicht ansieht, und so die Zeit zu vergeuden, die sich die Händler und Geniesser der Literatur nur vertreiben wollen. Ich weiss nicht, ob es eine jüdische Eigenschaft ist, das Buch Hiob lesenswert zu finden, oder ob es Antisemitismus ist, ein Buch Schnitzlers in die Ecke des Zimmers zu werfen. Ob es jüdisch gefühlt ist oder deutsch, zu sagen, dass die Schriften der Juden Else Lasker-Schüler und Peter Altenberg Gott und der Sprache näherstehen, als alles, was das deutsche Schrift-

[1] It is due to my ignorance thar I could hardly say as much about the race problem as is necessary in order to be considered an intelligent man in a half-way decent bowling club that maintains certain standards ... that one cannot give up one's membership in life, even if one kills oneself, and that one can, without killing oneself, lead that higher life of the spirit to which one would inescapably fall prey if one *did* commit suicide. Thus I do believe that one may maintain even within one's race that higher condition which once no race was denied or which, once reached, never would have made a race unbearable. And thus it is probably also possible to hate characteristics for which one might have searched in vain at the point when Jewry hadn't yet declared itself independent from God. On the other hand, to assert ... that I ... feel as deeply as if it were a revelation, that I am free of all the characteristics of the Jews which we can observe according to the present-day state of Jewish affairs. But although we admit that a hundred annual sets of antisemitic periodicals are filled with miserable stammering compared with the language used in a single gloss of *Die Fackel,* we shall concede about the tendency of such hatred of the Jews the honorable fact that it strives toward an origin and never toward a goal .... *Untergang,* pp. 361f.

tum in den letzten fünfzig Jahren, die Herr Bahr lebt, hervorgebracht hat. Mit der Rasse kenne ich mich nicht aus. Wie sich die Dummheit deutschvölkischer Schriftleiter und Politiker das denkt, wenn sie mich als einen von ihren Leuten anspricht, und wie sich der koschere Intellekt das zurechtlegt, wenn er mich als einen von unseren Leuten reklamiert, und umgekehrt – das weiss ich nicht, das geniert mich nicht, das geht mir bei einem Ohr hinein und zum Hals heraus. Ich weiss nicht, ob es antisemitische Streberei ist, den Ringstrassenjuden, der nie in den Tempel geht, aber am 18. August [1] in die Pfarrkirche von Ischl, für beiweitem keine so erfreuliche Erscheinung zu halten wie Herrn Bielohlawek, und ich weiss nicht, ob es eine jüdische Eigenschaft ist, einen alten Schnapsschänker im Kaftan kulturvoller zu finden, als ein Mitglied der deutsch-österreichischen Schriftstellergenossenschaft im Smoking.[2]

What Kraus was saying here was, briefly, that he was able to see true value in Jew and gentile alike. If, however, he was not willing to recognize as much good in Jews as did the average non-antisemitic Viennese, this was, no doubt, partly due to his feeling of greater responsibility for those who actually were his own people. He reacted spontaneously and violently to any sign of Jewishness and marked the whole phenomenon negatively. One might object: "What about the Schnaps dealer in the above quotation?" He did not have the earmarks of the Jewish environment which Kraus recognized and disliked; besides, Kraus simply did not know him, and in the pictures he may have seen the Eastern Jew did look like *the* sage and *the* patriarch.[2] Kraus stressed that he was only opposed to Jews who had emancipated themselves from God, and he did not mean, of course, emancipation from Jewish religion, but rather from a reverent attitude toward life. One may perhaps easily disagree with Kraus on this subject. However, throughout his writings he gave the impression that there was more such irreligiosity among the Jewish minority than in the rest of the population combined, and while the truth or untruth of that emphasis

[1] The birthday of Emperor Francis Joseph.

[2] And then I don't know if it is a Jewish characteristic to use so much passion and world-denial in every breath required for a thought that one could never tell by looking at the work on which I have spent fifteen years, and so wasted the time, which the dealers in, and readers of, literature only want to pass away. I don't know if it is a Jewish quality to find the book of Job worth reading, or whether it is antisemitism to throw a book by Schnitzler into the corner ... Whether it is to feel Jewish or German to say that the writings of Else Lasker-Schüler and Peter Altenberg are closer to God and to language than anything that German literature has produced in the last fifty years that Mr. Bahr has lived. I don't understand anything about race. What the stupidity of German national editors and politicians thinks when it addresses me as one of their own, and how the kosher intellect comes to claim me as "one of our people" and vice versa, that I don't know, that doesn't bother me, that goes in by one ear, and out my throat. I don't know if it is antisemitic social climbing to consider the Jew from the Ringstrasse who never goes to the temple, but to the Ischl parish church on August 18th [3] a much less desirable personality than Mr. Bielohlawek, and I don't know if it is a Jewish characteristic to find an old Schnaps dealer in a caftan more cultured than a member of the German-Austrian writers' association in a tuxedo. *Ibid.*, pp. 365f.

[3] Emperor Franz Joseph's birthday.

cannot be proven, it is at any rate questionable. Still, Kraus felt that he had nothing in common with the ordinary antisemites.

It was only when he spoke of the most admirable characters of Jewish mythology that he was proud to identify himself with them as Jews:

Ich glaube von mir sagen zu dürfen, dass ich mit der Entwicklung des Judentums bis zum Exodus noch mitgehe, aber den Tanz um das goldene Kalb nicht mehr mitmache und von da an nur jener Eigenschaften mich teilhaltig weiss, die auch den Verteidigern Gottes und Rächern an einem verirrten Volk angehaftet haben ...[1]

Hence we can also understand what Kraus meant when he remarked in a mood more scornful of Christians than of Jews that he was not enough of a Jew to be able to be a Christian. Because he was not antisemitic on principle, he was able to approve of and even to admire such individual Jews as Peter Altenberg, Else Lasker-Schüler, and Adolph Loos. Again, the explanation is simple: Kraus did not find in them the traits which he considered Jewish. To him Jewish traits included Central-European Jewish mannerisms and expressions, a strong interest in business, membership in a Jewish literary clique, and some related traits. Perhaps these characteristics of some Central-European Jews and of other Jewish groups were "bad," and pointed to rootlessness, restlessness, insecurity, and a neurotic shift to false values. Even such antisemites as Liegler, however, were willing to explain those characteristics historically. They were due to the simultaneity of the Jews' entry into European cultural life with the general spread of literacy, of technological advances, and finally of the great era of liberalism in Austria. Kraus never analyzed; he only expressed intuitive flashes of insight, their syntheses, and individual witty comments. His writings about Jews are especially subjective. Since most of those whom he considered typically Jewish were distasteful to him, he had no pity for their sufferings and therefore, in spite of different motives and intentions, many of Kraus's views concurred with those of the most vicious antisemites until he was awakened by the horror of Hitler's concentration camps. And even then his attitude was not one of clear protest. His own expression, that he was "ein Abtrünninger aus ganzem Herzen," [2] was no exaggeration.

Language and Jewishness. It seems that Kraus's concern with

[1] I believe that I can say of myself that I go along with the development of Judaism up to the Exodus, but that I don't participate in the dance around the golden calf, and from then on I share only those characteristics which were also found in the defenders of God, and in the avengers of a people gone astray ... *Untergang der Welt durch die Schwarze Magie*, p. 362.

[2] "A renegade with all my heart."

language, especially the German language, is connected with his resentment of his Jewishness. When Kraus received his decisive impressions, one was still a German if one's mother tongue was German. At a time when racial theories were only in their beginnings and were taken seriously by very few, a Jew who spoke good German had so great a chance of gaining prestige among marginal groups that he could make himself believe that he was "accepted." It must be taken into consideration that German was *the* language of prestige in Central Europe. Might a Jew with a feeling for language, who had doubts about his acceptability in a German-speaking world, not place great emphasis upon its mastery? It is also understandable that he should try to set himself up as a censor and German teacher of the Germans in order to compensate for his feelings of insecurity.

There may have been greater masters of the German language than Kraus, but there was probably no one who cultivated it so earnestly and turned to it as a last refuge in times of distress very much as others turned to their God. Yet, tragically for Kraus, it was possible, and I think not entirely unjustifiable, for one of his most benevolent but still most objective critics, Ludwig Hänsel, to say:

Es steckt jüdische Vorurteilslosigkeit, Unbefangenheit, man kann auch sagen, jüdischer Zynismus und, so unglaublich es bei diesem grössten Kenner, Künstler und Lehrer der deutschen Sprache scheinen mag, doch wohl ein letzter Rest von Sprachfremdheit, Sprachgebundenheit hinter diesen Witzmöglichkeiten ...[1]

Materialism of the Jews. Kraus saw the Jews as the originators of such negative traits as materialism, but at times felt that the gentiles had developed in such a way that the Jews were no longer different from them:

Ich weiss nun doch nicht, was heute jüdische Eigenschaften sind. Wenn es nur eine gibt, die alle andern, besseren verstellt, Macht- und Habgier, so sehe ich diese auf alle Völker des Abendlandes gleichmässig ... verteilt, und wenn dann nur noch eine bleibt, der singende Tonfall, in dem sie ihre Geschäfte besorgen und besprechen, so sage ich, dass ihn die anderen auch treffen könnten, denn es ist der Tonfall, der das Rollen des Geldes wohlgefällig begleitet. Es ist die Sprache der Welt, es ist ihre Sehnsucht und wir dürfen sie ... müssen sie darum als einen jüdischen Zug ansprechen, weil das die Mission der Juden war, dank ihrer Uberredungsgabe, Ausdauer und grösseren Übung im durch die Welt kommen, dieser eben diese Eigenschaften anzuhängen.[2]

[1] There is Jewish lack of prejudice, lack of inhibition, one might say, Jewish cynicism and, no matter how incredible it may sound of this great expert, artist and teacher of the German language, there is probably at least a remnant of unfamiliarity with, but also of excessive attachment to, language behind all these possibilities of linguistic humor ... Ludwig Hänsel, "Karl Kraus," *Hochland*, XXXII (1934–35), 245.

[2] Now I don't know what are Jewish characteristics after all. If there is only one which replaces all the other, better ones, namely the desire for power and for property, I see it ...

Acceptance of antisemites. While Kraus was, of course, no racial antisemite, there is no doubt that he was especially proud of the fact that Lanz von Liebenfels [1] and Joseph Schöffel,[2] both antisemites, liked him. He was equally proud of having had original contributions for *Die Fackel* from Houston Stewart Chamberlain.[3] Kraus introduced his most systematic essay about the possible causes and remedies of antisemitism by expressing his revulsion at the pathos and the inarticulate anger with which Jews themselves discussed antisemitism, be it with a religious, political, or social emphasis.[4]

Explanation of antisemitism. His own explanation of antisemitism, which did not deviate from the explanations given by many others, was neither complete nor analytical. At first he was inclined to believe that it was the clergy and the political leaders who stirred up antisemitism and that the people merely continued unthinkingly on the same path. Later, Kraus explained antisemitism very simply as due to the existence of religious Jews and perpetuated by the law of inertia. Although by the time he started to publish *Die Fackel,* he believed that antisemitism was caused predominantly by greater industry and practical common sense, probably coupled with fewer scruples, on the part of the Jews, mainly those connected with the press, he insisted on what he called the religious origin of antisemitism. He did not actually mean a religious origin in the proper sense, nor even one in the religious laws of the Jews, but rather in that part of their isolation which was voluntary and due to their religion. The Jewish religion, according to Kraus, was evil at least for the Western Jew. It had no spiritual meaning to him, as it did in the case of the Eastern Jew; instead, it merely brought him disadvantages by standing in his way to assimilation.

Plea for assimilation. Kraus admitted that racial factors have something to do with keeping the Jews apart from the rest of the population, but the religious and social factors counted the most and were the main reason for Kraus's strong plea for assimilation. He be-

evenly distributed among all the peoples of the West, and if there is another left, the chanting voice in which they discuss and transact their business, then I say that the others would be capable of it, too, for it is the tone which forms a pleasant accompaniment to the rolling of money. It is the language of the world, it is its longing, and we must therefore call it a Jewish characteristic, because it was the mission of the Jews, thanks to their power of persuasion, endurance and greater practice in making their way through the world, to leave it stuck with just this quality. *Untergang,* p. 362f.

[1] *Die Fackel,* 386– (29. Oktober–Anfang November 1913), 2. Cf. also *ibid.,* 381–82–83 (September 1913), 44f.

[2] *Ibid.,* 81 (Ende Juni 1902), 2f.

[3] *Ibid.,* 92 (Mitte Jänner 1902), whole issue.

[4] *Ibid.,* 11 (Mitte Juli 1899), 1.

lieved that as soon as no one would any longer be identifiable as a Jew, no one would suffer as one. Moreover, he did not see any value in the retention of any aspects of Judaism or Jewishness. Those who thought otherwise only scratched the grave of a dead people with clumsy hands.[1]

Interestingly for someone who otherwise stood for truth and honesty without compromise, Kraus advocated intermarriage and the voluntary token acceptance of the religion of the majority of the local inhabitants to avoid persecution. One of the first steps should be the substitution of modern education for weak, undignified Jewish religious instruction [2] in "barbarian superstition." It was only the very young Kraus who could advocate such "conversion." [3] Later, as he became generally more pessimistic, he seems to have become sceptical about the existence of a solution to the Jewish problem. Besides, the formal step would not be sufficient. It would, he contended, be necessary for each individual to use all of the self-discipline at his command to shake off the last traces of the "*Ghettomensch*" (ghetto man) who was unsure, *gedrückt* (repressed), or aggressive, and to stop condemning as "Jewish antisemites" those who had freed themselves from certain accidental characteristics of their sphere of origin. It was best for the Jews not to discuss assimilation, but to carry it out and watch it, being at the same time as inconspicious as possible. The antisemitic riots which took place in Bohemia in 1902 supplied an occasion for Kraus to enlarge on this attitude:

Blutige Repressivmassregeln stacheln bloss den Hass gegen die Juden an und bereiten zukünftige Ausbrüche vor ... Schuld tragen die stolzen Träger der deutschen Kultur nicht minder als die jüdischen Kulturzwischenträger: Die Deutschen, weil sie die Bestrebungen der aufgeklärten Tschechen, ihr Volk zu bilden, hemmen; ... Die Juden, weil sie in Böhmen und namentlich in Mähren allen Assimilationsbemühungen trotzen und nicht bedenken, dass Ghettojudentum und Antisemitismus notwendig zueinander gehören ... Die unermüdliche Vorkämpferin des Antisemitismus, die Börsenpresse, bleibt ja dem Volke, das für alle Übel in der Welt die Juden verantwortlich macht, erhalten ... die durch alle Zeitläufte unverminderte Heftigkeit einer Bewegung schafft man nicht durch ... antiquiertes Solidaritätsgefühl, nicht durch feiges Vertuschen, aber auch nicht mit Hilfe protestierender Rabbinen aus der Welt. Nur mutiges Säubern in den eigenen Reihen, nur das Ablegen der Eigentümlichkeiten einer Rasse, die duch die vielhundertjährige Zerstreuung längst aufgehört hat, eine Nation zu sein, kann der Qual ein Ende machen ... Durch Auflösung zur Erlösung! [4]

[1] *Die Fackel*, 11 (Mitte Juli 1899), 6.

[2] It is interesting how many of Kraus's contemporaries – Kafka, Brod and Werfel, to mention just a few, wrote in the same vein about the instruction of children in the Jewish religion, as it was practiced in their time.

[3] Kraus addressed himself mainly to the "assimilated," the non-believers, among the Viennese Jews.

[4] Bloody repressive measures merely increase the hatred against the Jews and prepare

Unlike spokesmen of the enlightenment, such as Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Kraus did not believe that, since basically all major religions were alike, their adherents could live together in peace. In his opinion, the peculiarities by which the Jewish minority group in Austria distinguished itself from the majority were obnoxious and it seems that to him understandably so.

Kraus never suggested that he was aware of the inner difficulties with which the individual might be confronted in the process of trying to assimilate, obviously considering the hold which Judaism had, at any rate on Central European Jews, very insignificant. As far as Austria was concerned, he was also right to an extent in his expectation that then the road to equality would be open to them. However, it seems that Kraus favored the Jews' joining the Catholic Church only when the interpretation of such an action as financial or social climbing was unimaginable. As this involved drawing a very fine line, it was unavoidable that it should be overstepped, and that Kraus should be bitter and disappointed.

Und die Wiener Juden? ... Sie haben sich mit dem k.k. Antisemitismus des österreichischen Staates abgefunden, der seine Bürger jüdischen Glaubens zwingt, erst gründlichen Unterricht in der katholischen Religion zu nehmen, bevor er sie zu den Würden eines Auskultanten, Konzipisten oder gar Leutnants gelangen lässt.[1]

Lack of discussion of Jewish religion. In Kraus's writings there is hardly a trace of any discussion of Jewish religion or ethics. He dealt with the Jews mostly as a social or ethnic group, either scolding them, or much more rarely, attacking antisemites who were influenced, to what extent we can never know, by Kraus's own criticism of the Jews. Occasionally Kraus took the side of Jews who did not advance in

future outbreaks ... the proud bearers of German culture are no less guilty than the Jewish middlemen of culture: the Germans, because they hamper the efforts of the enlightened Czechs to educate their people; ... the Jews because they oppose all efforts at assimilation in Bohemia and especially in Moravia and do not consider that ghetto-Jewry and antisemitism necessarily belong together ... the untiring fighter in the forefront of antisemitism, the stock exchange press, remains there for the people who make the Jews responsible for all the evils in the world ... the violence of a movement which has remained unimpaired through all the vicissitudes of time cannot be done away with by ... an antiquated feeling of solidarity, nor by cowardly covering-up, nor futhermore with the help of protesting rabbis elsewhere in the world. Only by the courageous cleaning up in one's own ranks, only by the shedding of the peculiarities of a race which in its many years of dispersion has long ceased being a nation, can the torture be ended ... through dissolution to salvation! *Die Fackel*, 23 (Mitte November 1899), 5ff.

[1] And the Viennese Jews? ... They have become resigned to the imperial-royal antisemitism of the Austrian state which forces its citizens of the Jewish faith first to take thorough instruction in the Catholic religion before they may achieve the dignity of a (low official) or even of a lieutenant. *Die Fackel*, 32 (Mitte Februar 1900), 22f.

government service, although well qualified,[1] and from time to time he satirized the antisemitic press, which was just as vicious but not as intelligent as its Jewish competitors. Connected, in Kraus's opinion, with the insistence of the Jews on keeping the label of Jewishness was their extreme group loyalty, which helped, in turn, to foster their idea of being the unblemished, the "chosen" people. He went so far as to blame them for their great efforts to avoid the least stain on their name, convinced that that, too, brought about more antisemitism. The Jews' rejoicing over the outcome of the Dreyfus case,[2] Kraus was certain, would be just as harmful in that respect as Rothschild's tainted financial dealings.[3]

Objections to Jews often contradictory. As a matter of fact, Kraus objected to the behavior of Jews no matter what it might be. If he wanted them to become assimilated, would one not expect that he would have approved of their being loyal citizens of their country? Kraus, however, scorned the Budapest Jews for being Hungarian patriots. Extreme loyalty to the ruler of the moment was distasteful to him. But did patriotism not mean giving up one's Jewish identification to as great an extent as did what Kraus advocated, namely, entire assimilation in manners, and union with a church traditionally scorned and hated by the Jews for deeds such as its execution of thirty thousand Jews during the Spanish Inquisition? Regardless of his views which would have made one assume approval on his part, Kraus objected to the Jews' changing their names to Hungarian ones although they still spoke German.

Attacks against Jewish big business. As pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, a large part of big business, including that of the stock exchange, was in the hands of the Jews, and one can assume that they, too, had a certain share in whatever crooked business deals there were. Kraus, however, attacked them emphatically as Jews. He stated more then once that it seemed to him that the Viennese Jews had to exploit and to cheat in order to live; a public which saw the interests of the Semites to be antisocial was therefore bound to reach the conclusion that antisemitism was social. He reproached Lueger, the mayor of Vienna and one of the founders of modern political antisemitism, for

[1] *Ibid.*, 147 (21. November 1903), 25f.

[2] The court-martial (1894), based on forged papers, of Captain Dreyfus, and his imprisonment on Devil's Island. Although his guilt was reaffirmed at a second court-martial (1899), the public and the government were satisfied he was innocent, and he was pardoned, restored to rank (1906), and decorated.

[3] At this time Kraus wrote many lengthy articles and published some by other authors, trying to prove how the Rothschilds and other Jewish concerns cheated the public.

letting Rothschild get away with millions which were not his, while at the same time Lueger had the "eternally cheated populace" enthusiastic about him by persecuting a Jewish peddler.

While this example shows that above Kraus's criticism of the Jews there was still his criticism of injustice, exemplified here in the contrast between the treatment of the Jew Rothschild and the Jewish peddler, it is easy to see how Kraus played into the hands of the antisemites by giving the impression, certainly not without factual foundation, that Austria-Hungary was to a considerable extent run by Jewish high finance.

Antisemitic jokes. It so happens generally that the jokes which are most genuinely and lastingly funny are those made at the expense of definite groups thought of in terms of stereotypes. It would be hard to find jokes about Jews equal to those by Kraus. His lack of fear of hurting the Jewish cause, which to some extent restricted the antisemitic humor of his Jewish contemporaries, and the ability to sketch a ridiculous situation in one phrase, made him unique. If the antisemitic jokes with which his work abounds were not greatly appreciated outside the circle of his followers, it was because it was often necessary to be acquainted with the Viennese Jewish atmosphere and with its language in order to understand them. It is amazing that among the people with these qualifications there were so many who were not too horrified to be amused.

By *the Jewish press,* Kraus meant the newspapers edited and written largely by the Jews in Vienna, the foremost of which was the *Neue Freie Presse.* In the Jewish journalists, people who, in his opinion, had not succeeded in becoming independent writers, Kraus saw the true descendents of Heine. They succeeded in preserving the greatest pretense of dignity, while actually being the most money-minded.

Denn während die Judenblätter so schamlos sind, jedes Eingesendet gegen Bezahlung aufzunehmen ...[1]

The Dreyfus affair. Kraus published numerous articles against the campaign to give Dreyfus another trial, advocated in France mainly by Emile Zola and in the German-speaking countries by the liberal press. It is characteristic of antisemitic Jews that they do not like to see anybody in the limelight who might attract attention because he is a Jew. Kraus stayed within that pattern: doubting that Dreyfus's

[1] For while the Jewish papers are so shameless as to print for pay everything that is sent to them, ... *Die Fackel,* 389–90 (Mitte Dezember 1913). 9. Cf. also chap. IV.

persecution was purely due to antisemitism, and thus doubting his innocence, he clearly showed his agreement with Wilhelm Liebknecht's articles, many of which appeared in *Die Fackel*.[1] Kraus did not think quite as negatively of Emile Zola as did Liebknecht, who saw Zola as a man with neither tact nor taste. Besides, Liebknecht viewed the affair from the standpoint of the Socialist confronted with "chauvinist" reactions. Kraus, not being a party man, mainly regretted the fact that antisemitism was being discussed constantly, and the public was thus becoming more aware of it. In his view, the campaign therefore did more to increase antisemitism than did the still undisproved guilt of Dreyfus.

Kraus also pointed out that the testimony of the German authorities in favor of Dreyfus did not count because it would have been counter to diplomatic ethics for a country to betray its own spy. Kraus's most just criticism in connection with the affair was censure of *the* – he might have said *many* – German and Austrian Jews. These, confronted with a possible mistake of the French military authorities, had behaved like chauvinists, spoken contemptuously of the French in general, lauded their own countries excessively, and completely ignored the fact that in Kraus's opinion at least, German and Austro-Hungarian antisemitism had always been and still was stronger than French antisemitism.[2]

As to Dreyfus's guilt, Kraus seemed to waver; at any rate, he never expressed his belief in it directly; the falsifications of Dreyfus's opponents [3] in his favor made Kraus less favorably inclined toward him. To Kraus and to Liebknecht, the attitude of pity for Dreyfus on the part of Jewish journalists, rabbis, and others was much more to be condemned then all the antisemitism of France. Kraus tried to show the lack of justification for all discussion by comparing the stir around the one man Dreyfus with the ignored fate of the poor miners nearer home or with the plague spreading from India to Italy, where the same press engaged in "Lebendigschweigen" [4] for the sake of doing better business in the Italian resorts. Sadly amusing in view of Kraus's lifelong activity was the fact that, referring again to the liberal press, he declared that it was not necessary for anyone not directly concerned to take a stand. The revision of Dreyfus's sentence would have come much

[1] *Ibid.*, 18 (Ende September 1899), 1 ff.

[2] At the time of the Dreyfus affair, *Die Fackel* was, according to Kraus, widely read in France, especially in socialist circles. *Die Fackel*, 26 (Mitte Dezember 1899), 9.

[3] *Ibid.*, 21 (Ende Oktober 1899), 1 ff.

[4] Kraus often referred to the journalists' practice of ignoring his existence as "Totschweigen." "Lebendigschweigen" then means the opposite: to ignore cases of death.

sooner, he claimed, if there had been no campaign. When Dreyfus was finally released, Kraus felt triumphant because the freeing was clearly not due to the uncertainty of his guilt, but in his opinion, to humanitarian reasons. He also felt gratified with regard to his own view of Dreyfus's character when the latter did not insist on proof of his innocence. Kraus was convinced that the drive had been waged with much unnecessary sensationalism and for the selfish ends of those who conducted it. He asserted that one of the principal figures, Max Nordau, had himself admitted those selfish ends.[1] For some time, boom and recession on the stock exchange depended on the Dreyfus affair. The people who were there engaged in what Kraus denounced as dirty business liked to hear themselves shout that "la vérité est en marche" (truth is marching on).

The Hilsner affair. Kraus's reaction to the Hilsner ritual-murder trial was, in miniature, the same as to the Dreyfus affair. Again, he was primarily concerned with the fact that good newspapers should bother writing for four weeks about a "herabgekommener Mensch, ein Vagabund, dessen Schuld oder Unschuld gar nicht bewiesen ist"; [2] he was annoyed with and ridiculed the feud between the antisemitic and the Jewish papers with regard to the existence of ritual murder, and made fun of a Jewish writer's exclamation that the Jews needed another family of Maccabees. He praised Lueger, the antisemitic mayor of Vienna, for his protest against the Jews' self-defense, and felt that he had proved his point when he could point to an instance of "business as usual" going on despite the ritual-murder case of Polna.[3]

The Zionist movement. In the light of what has been said, it goes without saying that Kraus strongly opposed the Zionist movement. This is also understandable apart from his attitude toward the Jews, since he tended to be prejudiced against any new movement. The very title of his pamphlet *Eine Krone für Zion* showed his attitude quite clearly. It was intentionally ambiguous, playing on the supposedly laughable ideas of a coin and of a royal crown for Zion. Kraus subordinated to such prejudice the details of what he had to say about Zionism.

Let us consider the case of Theodor Herzl. He had been, to be sure, an assimilationist Jew who wrote feuilletons for the *Neue Freie Presse.*[4]

[1] *Die Fackel,* 27 (Ende Dezember 1899), 24.

[2] A degraded man, a vagabond whose guilt or innocence is not proven at all. *Ibid.,* 58 (November 1900), 62.

[3] The Hilsner case. Cf. p. 102.

[4] *Die Fackel,* 68 (Mitte Februar 1901), 23f.

Kraus ridiculed Herzl's shift of allegiance, using such expressions as "King of the Jews" and "Herzl I"; as does anything unexpected, these epithets made people laugh, at least all those whose laughter was not choked by the realization of the tragedy being ridiculed. Would it not be possible to take the opposite view and to compare Herzl for example with Saint Paul, who recanted and was able to find the right road in the end?

Kraus disregarded the hope which the movement implanted in the hearts of many with no other hope. He rather spoke in generalities about the "crooked business carried on in the Zionist camp," but never gave the slightest factual evidence of the validity of such criticism.

Kraus's authority and his misuse of it. Kraus here as elsewhere played the role of a prophet in a society where the words of a reputable publicist were assumed to be based on truth. He was not bound by the conventions of relatively cool, objective criticism and analysis, and was given credit for the truth of his statements in a broader sense than he deserved. Kraus received much acclaim from all those other Jews for whom Judaism was only a burden with nothing positive to compensate for it. These were the Jewish self-haters, who wanted very much to see the situation as Kraus saw it. Only in this way can it be explained why so many young intellectuals, mainly Jewish, were willing to hear so much that was contradictory or irrelevant in Kraus's statements on this subject. It is quite conceivable that one could be touched by the painstaking collection of *shekels* [1] from all Zionists; yet Kraus ridiculed it, just as he ridiculed Max Nordau's claim that it was impossible to make the Jews indistinguishable from their environment. Less than a year later, however, he quoted a statement by Grabbe which clearly expressed the opposite view:

> Judenjungen, deren Bildung im Schweinefleischessen besteht, spreizen sich auf den kritischen Richterstühlen ... Reimschmiede, die so dumm sind ...[2]

Kraus maintained the same opinion in 1917, apparently without realizing that it could also be applied to himself: "... Judenbuben sind die Dichter der Nation, der sie nicht angehören, ..." [3] showing clearly that he did not consider even the most "accepted" Jews truly assimilated.

[1] Coins, the payment of which entitled one to vote in the Jewish Congress.

[2] Jewish fellows whose education consists of eating pork, are sprawling on the critical judges' chairs ... rhymesters who are so stupid ... *Die Fackel*, 68 (Mitte Februar 1901), 24.

[3] Jewish scamps are the poets of a nation to which they do not belong ... *Ibid.*, 457–61 (10. Mai 1917), 96.

It was also typical of Kraus to try to discredit an opponent by criticizing him for his appearance or for views which had nothing to do with the main issue in question; thus, in order to discredit Nordau, he ridiculed his theory about Michelangelo's statues; similarly, he often dwelt on Herzl's beard. Ordinarily such arguments would be far beneath the dignity of a serious publicist. Kraus's position deviated from the norm in several ways. He was able to appeal to some of the best minds of his time by the high intellectual level of some of his discussions. If they were to a lesser extent discussions than bold statements, that factor supplied additional appeal for many. What was wanted by his followers, people emancipated from any recognized spiritual authority, was leadership intellectually acceptable to them, leadership giving articulation to their attitudes and founded on their emotional needs. Equally important in the circles to which Kraus appealed was a certain amount of learning and of wit.

Throughout Kraus's work, there are many indictments of whole Jewish groups, especially the Jewish war profiteers, psychiatrists and literati, and mainly the Jewish press. Thus he spoke of "Krieg ... nicht selten die Ernte der Grossen, der Minister, der Generale, Lieferanten und Juden," [1] and of the Jews in Poland, most of whom were in no position to do what Kraus claimed: "Jude und Schlachziz beuten das unglückliche Land aus ..." [2] There are remarks such as this: "... in der jüdischen Presse ... die prinzipiell jedes Wort, das ihr unter die Hände kommt, krumm biegt und schwer beugt." [3]

In connection with the decadence of the theater: "... so hatten diese den Ton und den Gang von Juden." [4] In the *Fackel* of July, 1934, written by Kraus in the name of the *Fackel Verlag*, and about himself in the third person, we find:

Was seine Kritik der minderen jüdischen Typen anbelangt, die in der Literatur wie in der Psychologie die grausamen Repressalien an Geist und Natur verüben, so scheinen ihm eben diese, mit allem Eingriff in Seele und Sprache ... geistesgeschichtlich nicht weniger gravierend und beträchtlich als jene Exzesse, durch die unmittelbar das Erbarmen mit menschlichem Leid angesprochen wird.[5]

[1] War ... not rarely the harvest of the great, the ministers, the generals, the suppliers and the Jews. *Die Fackel*, 601–7 (November 1922), 72.

[2] Jew and nobleman exploit the unhappy country ... *Ibid.*, 34 (Anfang März 1900), 17.

[3] ... in the Jewish press ... which on principle bends and distorts every word that comes into its hands until it is deformed ... *Ibid.*, 890–905 (July 1934), 88.

[4] ... Thus these had the tone and the walk of Jews. *Untergang*, p. 165.

[5] As far as his critique of the lesser Jewish types is concerned, which in literature as well as in psychology mercilessly violate spirit and nature, it is just these that seem to him no less serious for cultural history than those excesses which appeal directly to one's pity for human suffering. *Die Fackel*, 890–905 (Juli 1934) 37f.

Kraus frequently expressed his contempt for the socially climbing Jewish bourgeoisie:

> ... also jenes Abschaums der Menschheit, der die Crème der Gesellschaft bildet ... jenes Gemenge und Geschiebe von Edeljuden und sogenannten Patriziern, ...[1]

In his most important (partial) biography by Liegler, of whom Kraus thought well enough to dedicate his *Untergang der Welt durch die schwarze Magie* to him, there are frequent approving references to Kraus's negative attitude toward the Jews such as:

> Kraus fasst also im jüdischen Problem sowohl den Wendepunkt der eigenen Entwicklung als auch, und vor allem, den Kern und Herd des allgemeinen kulturellen Zerstörungsprozesses.[2]

What makes the claims that Kraus was an antisemite seem most justified, however, are his own statements which condemn not this or that Jewish group, but the Jews, or the Jewish spirit, in general. Kraus was, to be sure, thinking of the contemporary Jews when he compared their traits with "einem Stand der Judenheit, wo sie sich noch nicht von Gott selbständig gemacht hatte." [3] Another time he referred to them as "ein Gesindel, ... dem Religion das ist, woran der Salo Cohn glaubt, und Kunst das, was er kaufen kann ..." [4] That he considered the Jews essentially void of idealism becomes clear in a remark about" ... dem unvermeidlichen Pogrom der Juden auf die Ideale." [5] Here Kraus attributed to the Jews an active part in something as horrible to them as pogroms; he even claimed that such activity was characteristic of all Jews, and directed against "the ideals" in general. While Kraus did, of course, not believe in the superstition of ritual murder, he considered the Jews, incapable of the religious fervor necessary for such murder, spiritually even more deadly. In reference to ritual murder he spoke of:

> Die tief unter dem Verdacht leben, dass sie irgend etwas zu religiösem Zweck verwenden könnten. Deren Seele des fanatischen Aufschwungs zu einem Mord in Gottes Namen nicht fähig wäre. Deren Hände nicht fähig wären, Blut zu

[1] ... That is to say of that scum (of mankind) which forms the cream of society ... that milling around and racketeering of ennobled Jews and so-called patricians ... *Ibid.*, 595–600 (Juli 1922), 34.

[2] Kraus ... sees in the Jewish problem the turning point of his own development and above all the nucleus and point of origin of the general process of cultural deterioration. Liegler, *Karl Kraus und sein Werk*, p. 87.

[3] The stage at which the Jews had not yet declared themselves independent of God *Untergang*, p. 362.

[4] A rabble, ... to which religion means that in which Salo Cohn believes, and art that which he can buy ... *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[5] ... The inevitable pogrom of the Jews against ideals. *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 173.

opfern. Nur fähig sind, Geld zu gewinnen. Und das Blut, das sie verwenden,[1] ist nicht dem Leib des Christen, sondern dem Geist des Menschen abgezapft!

The worst aspect of those undesirable Jewish characteristics was that their effects were not confined to themselves: "Kann es anders sein in einem Staat, in dessen Lebensadern das Gift der korruptesten jüdischen Einflüsse kreist, ... [2]

How seriously Kraus meant his satiric remark about" ... die Zerstörung Österreichs durch Jerusalem ..." [3] is often expressed in the words of the *Nörgler* (pessimist) in *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*:

Der Militarismus ... ist das Machtmittel, das der jeweils herrschenden Geistesrichtung zu ihrer Durchsetzung dient. Heute dient er nicht anders, als ihr die Presse dient, der Idee der jüdisch-kapitalistischen Weltzerstörung.[4]

The Jewish capitalistic spirit was to weaken Europe so much that it would fall prey to the fresher-spirited Asiatics:

Ich meine, dass dann das judaisierte Christentum vor dem Gebot des asiatischen Geistes die Waffen strecken wird.[5]

The question of Kraus's antisemitism. It is interesting that those who believed in the truth of practically every one of Kraus's words and were certainly acquainted with most of them will defend Kraus most strongly against the charge of antisemitism. Does this antisemitism need more proof than that which was already pointed out in the course of this chapter? Kraus complained throughout his life that he was considered an antisemite although he fought only against unclean Jews, while blaming existing antisemitism largely on the unwillingness of the Jews to be assimilated. In spite of Kraus's own frequent insistence on his desire to see value and unworthiness anywhere, and his refusal to be identified with a group, he has often been called a prophet who concentrated on chastizing Jews because, being one of them, he was especially interested in reforming them.

Other "negative Jews." Kraus had many traits in common with all

[1] Those who live far beneath the suspicion that they could use anything for religious purposes. Those whose soul would not be capable of a fanatical upsurge to murder in the name of God, whose hands would not be capable of sacrificing blood. Who are only capable of making money. And the blood which they use is not drawn from the bodies of Christians, but from the spirit of man! *Die Fackel*, (Mitte November) 1913, 40.

[2] Can it be otherwise in a state which has the most corrupt Jewish influences circulating in its veins ... *Ibid.*, 33 (Ende Februar 1900), 20.

[3] The destruction of Austria by Jerusalem ... *Ibid.*, 378–79, 380 (Juli 1913), 58.

[4] Militarism is the violent means which helps the attitudes prevalent at a particular time to assert themselves. Today it serves, exactly like the press, the idea of Jewish-capitalist world destruction. *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, p. 171.

[5] I think that then Judaized Christendom will lay down its arms at the command of the Asiatic spirit. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

those whose maladjustment arose from the same causes. He suffered under the realization of being identified with the Jews. Having spent his most decisive years being known as one, he would never be able to solve his problem simply by leaving the group and being known elsewhere as a non-Jew. He probably would never be able to compare his present and past allegiances without strong emotion. More frequently, such individuals stayed with one foot inside the Jewish group, calling themselves "enlightened Jews" and often expressing the truth by explaining that they were, culturally and religiously, non-Jews. It is understandable that there were more self-hating Jews among the German-speaking ones than among many others, for they were the most assimilated and reached the position of almost but not quite becoming members of the in-group. It is interesting that many Jews who have made a name for themselves in the world followed this pattern. In an article on the Jews,[1] Torberg says that such "negative Jews" always took their stand toward German-Jewish dualism either in melancholy or in hysteria. They either accepted defeat and sank into the obscurity of their own group or, taking the second alternative, they became rigidly stubborn in their self-assertion. At the bottom of this self-assertion, however, there was a feeling of inadequacy, of exclusion, and of frustration. What we originally called a dualism was actually no dualism at all; in order for it to be that, the Jews' attitude would have had to be one of dual affirmation which it was definitely not; it was rather the desire to be the one, and the equally strong desire not to be the other. Besides, since the Germans were not interested in what Jews had to offer, and since therefore the Jews had to approach the Germans as petitioners rather than as equals in a bargain, they were treated accordingly and did not realize they were undermining their own existence by rejecting the Eastern Jews as inferiors supposedly having nothing in common with themselves. They experienced but never understood the truth that one cannot be respected by others if one does not respect himself.

Contrast with conscious Jews. For the sake of perspective, however, it might be useful to compare the self-haters, even those of greatest stature, with a man like Martin Buber, who never forced himself upon anyone, proclaimed openly his identity as a Jew, and if his conscience so dictated, was uncompromising enough to fight. Considering, in contrast to Kraus, Zionism the proper Jewish attitude toward life,

[1] Friedrich Torberg, "Whose Stepchildren?", *Contemporary Jewish Record*, VIII (1945), 307ff.

Buber believed that in it the Jewish soul could express itself creatively. It was to be the consciousness of the Jewish past, of being a link in ɐ chain, which was to free the Jew from the feeling of isolation in ɐ largely non-Jewish environment. Believing that the desire for unity was a basic Jewish trait, he though that, just as the Jew could unite the old Messianic hope and the social ideal, so he could also be the expression of the synthesis of German and Jewish culture. Buber was a mystic philosopher who saw the problems of Jewish mysticism in relation to those of mysticism in general. In keeping with this attitude, he cooperated with a Protestant and a Catholic in editing *Die Kreatur*. Kraus's course, on the other hand, was determined less by an unshakeable inner sense of direction than by his emotional reaction to the irregular patterns of the outside world and by his horror of being identified with anyone.

Attitude at the time of the Nazis. When, at the time of the Nazis, Kraus became almost completely silent, his silence was doubly motivated. On the one hand he must have become painfully aware of the highly objectionable points of comparison between himself and the Nazis. He knew that if he spoke he would hear himself blow into their horn. On the other hand, he still wanted to have nothing to do with the other side, the Jewish journalists. When he did start to write again, actually many months after Hitler's rise to power, the Nazis became somewhat of a target for his attacks, although formerly he had done no more than refer to them as "*Troglodyten.*" [1] He continued, nevertheless, to scold the Jews, expressing frequently his hatred of Jewish emigrant journalists, whom he still blamed for all the misfortunes, and censored the more influential Jews in Germany for still being relatively well-off:

> ... die Naturkraft eines unkompromittierbaren Judentums ... das von Rasse und Kasse, von Klasse, Gasse und Masse, kurz jeglichem Hass zwischen Troglodyten und Schiebern unbehelligt in sich beruht ...[2]

Even in the last extremity it was impossible for him to join the Jewish cause.

[1] Cavemen, here people with the morality of cavemen.

[2] ... The elemental force of a Jewry which cannot be compromised ... which rests within itself unaffected by race, cash, class, street and mass, in brief by any hatred between troglodytes and shady financiers ... *Die Fackel*, 890–905 (Ende July 1934). 38.

CHAPTER IX

BALANCE

Negative and hidden social concept. One would entirely misunderstand Kraus's significance if one were to try to analyze his views in a purely intellectual manner, to try to define his concepts, and to arrive at theories. It was only rarely and in a very fragmentary way that Kraus dealt at all systematically or even connectedly with any of the phenomena which occupied him. When he did so, it was under the impact of intense, often violent, emotion. The reader felt the sincerity of these outbursts, and experienced something of the author's intensity in the rapid alternation of despair, hysterical laughter, and lyric beauty. Underlying such passages, one sometimes senses scraps of attitudes which may be pieced together into a basic attitude toward the world. One is closest to the "core" of Kraus in those writings which by their very form suggest freedom from convention, such as small *Notizen, Glossen* (notes, glosses), and comments on the latter, and most of all between the lines of passages reprinted from contemporary newspapers and books.

At first, Kraus's work presents a picturesque manifold of themes, styles, literary media and opinions. Many of the views seem contradictory; the reader will, for instance, wonder how Kraus could extol the rule of one man in 1913, denounce all ruling monarchs within his orbit in 1915, welcome the rule of the people in 1919, and again hail a minor dictator in 1934. How can this be explained, especially with a man who has made it his life's work to study the scene around him? What is the underlying unity?

The difficulty in finding it is increased by Kraus's often intentionally involved style, especially by the paradoxical form of his witticisms. However, ultimately the key to his unity emerges clearly: it is his sensitivity to all phenomena around him which he felt to be good or bad. He reacted to them violently, often constructing a minor work of

art out of a (usually negative) reaction, and forgetting in his creative zeal that he had, in order to strengthen his argument of the moment, permitted the pendulum to swing too far in the opposite direction, and thus himself to appear as the advocate of something which he would probably expressly reject tomorrow. This characteristic of Kraus's writings would not be so striking if he had not, in general, employed the method possible only with a very courageous man, namely of dealing immediately with concrete situations.

Kraus, a cultural and social critic who either despised or ignored all comparable critics, was able to view each particular case with a more penetrating mind than others, unrestricted by cumbersome scientific method. But he never went beyond pointing a finger at immediate evils and immediate responsibility to a deeper analysis of social causation and social dynamics, or even proposing alternate courses of action. This kind of thinking would have much too taming an effect on his polemics. It is useless to speculate whether Kraus would have meant more to the world if he had been a critic with a consistent philosophy of science and literature which would have filled the gap between his basic values and concrete cases. This was, with him, not a matter of choice, but one of psychological makeup. His literary form was dramatic, his personal form was that of an actor, and had this been otherwise, we might perhaps not have known of his existence. He had to shape his grievances dramatically, if they were to be *Lichtsynthese* (synthesis of light) which he admired in Nestroy, and not *Spektral-analyse* (spectral analysis) which he despised in Hebbel.

Difficulty of following Kraus. On the one hand, Kraus wanted to teach his followers to think independently; on the other, he was often disappointed when he saw that, starting from the same premises, their thinking pursued different paths from his, and that they reached different conclusions. At such times it appears, in spite of what has been said above, that he would have preferred them to accept his own conclusions of faith. Most of the followers of Kraus, however, were people who lacked leadership, and there was no one else to whom they could have turned who had a comparably strong emotional appeal. What must have given Kraus his oft-expressed sense of failure was the fact that the peculiar experience he was able to give could attract only a limited number of people. Because they were usually alert and intellectually curious, however, many were unable to bear for long his absolute commands concerning how to feel and think about all phenomena, eternal and temporal. It goes without saying that it would

have been decidedly against Kraus's principles to use diplomatic tactics of any kind designed to make people act in a certain way without their being aware of it. Thus Kraus, who did not actually want to point out a road, but merely to stir up his Viennese, was bound to fail to a large extent even in the smaller task, that of teaching them how to read and think so that each might seek and possibly find his own way.

Sensitivity as Kraus's criterion and goal. Kraus criticized his fellow human beings according to their deviations from his own standards of good taste, sympathy, beauty, and tact. These concepts were interconnected for him and could therefore not exist without each other. He was almost neurotically sensitive, especially to sound, and most of all to language. Every *Glosse* and every *Notiz* was intended to bring the reader closer to the goal Kraus had set for him. As I have suggested, he was to learn how to read and how to see, and gradually to acquire Kraus's sensitivity, his taste, and perhaps eventually his passion for the exclusive justive and supreme beauty of the world which Kraus desired. After reading a series of *Glossen,* each pointing out something wrong with the world, by a process of elimination one feels that the remaining world has narrowed down to something approximating Kraus's ideal. It would be a harmonious world, one without wars; one in which the press would no longer reign freely and devastatingly over letters, and yet one whose freedom would not be unduly tampered with by government interference. The relationships of the sexes would be free and beautiful; the profit motive would no longer defile man in all walks of life.

If this ideal is largely expressed in negative terms, it is because one cannot do so affirmatively, although one may find this ideal fragmentarily throughout Kraus's writings. If I may use this comparison: Jesus often spoke in parables; his moral precepts alone would be simplifications. In Kraus's work there are few general statements, but thousands of examples and general statements about him can only give an outline; the rest flows through one's fingers unless it is felt intuitively. This lack of a program, however, enabled Kraus at all times to point directly at the goal, no matter what his theme or target might be at the moment. Thus those who could learn to understand his language could constantly grow in sensitivity which to him was essential for a better world. Kraus knew that the masses who could not understand him could also not be saved by the many programs they had encountered throughout history. He stayed faithful to his intention, expressed in one of the

earliest numbers of *Die Fackel,* of not writing objectively.[1] Although he usually expressed himself with an air of authority which permitted no contradiction, he once even claimed that a *Fackel,* dedicated to aphorisms, contained nothing but prejudice.[2] He conceived of his own writing as a responsibility for changing the hearts of men and of awakening them to a consciousness of humaneness and values similar to his own.

Life the supreme value. To Kraus, life was the supreme value, and freedom was to him freedom from interference with life. When confronted with the Nazis' dual crimes, those against human lives and those against cultural values, there was no doubt in his mind as to which were greater; one human life was worth more than the cultural values of the *Kurfürstendamm* which were lost. Only if he could educate truly strong individuals- and although he doubted that more and more as time went on, he never thought anyone else would be able to do so – would a truly cultured mankind emerge.

View of death. An important aspect of his attitude toward himself can be found in his ideas on life and death. With a conception of life based upon faith in spirit, he used to say that he wanted to live forever and could never die because the spirit was bound to have the power to prevent death. In his poem *Todesfurcht,*[3] he expressed the conviction that he was so involved with this world that it could not know itself without him. He wanted to go on living after death. Once he said to an old friend: "Nur im Zustande des Irrsinns kann ich dem Tod verfallen. Es ist nicht wahr, dass Goethe friedlich starb. Er schrie drei Tage und drei Nächte lang in Todesangst." [4]

Although Kraus was a sick man after his first heart attack of August, 1934, he believed most of the time that he would ultimately recover. Those of his poems, however, which seem most sincere often express his insecurity which reached its most conscious expression in his fear of death. In his satires evidences of such feelings can be read only between the lines; in his lyric poetry, he was, by contrast, extremely open. It is in this insecurity which he shares with the rest of mankind, that he appears the most human.

[1] *Die Fackel,* 14 (Mitte August 1899), 15.
[2] *Ibid.,* 241 (15. Jänner 1908), 1ff.
[3] Fear of Death. *Worte in Versen,* VI, 68.
[4] Only in madness can I fall prey to death. It is not true that Goethe died peacefully. He screamed for three days and three nights in fear of death. (Reported by Mrs. Helene Kann of Zürich, and contained in a written statement which was kindly put at my disposal by Karl Kraus's sister, Mrs. Malwina Weingarten.)

Did he perhaps semi-consciously share the view of many of his contemporaries that poetry might be considered as fiction, and therefore did not need to be interpreted as a personal expression? These are the most revealing lines:

Vor dem Einschlafen
Wovor ist mir denn bang?
Was soll mit mir denn geschehen?
. . . . . .
Schlaf, rett' mich vor dem Tod.[1]
. . . . . .

Then he expressed in "*Bange Stunde*" (anxious hour) his consciousness of being chained to a "vorbestimmten Kreise" (predetermined circle) and continued:

Gebannt steh' ich auf diesem Fleck
Und kann nicht zurück und kann nicht weg
Und suche mit dreimal flehenden Händen,
Ein sicheres Schicksal abzuwenden.
. . . . . .
wie dreht sich und droht mir,
wie knarrt mir die Tür
wie rennt mir die Stunde in rasendem Lauf,
. . . . . .
und Falten und Kanten, sie starren mich an,
des Zufalls unseligsten Untertan! . . .[2]

Explanation of Kraus from his Austrian background. It was the atomization of the Austrian society and state which made the existence of a man like Kraus possible. Since he had early freed himself from the views of his family background, there was no one mode of life and thinking which was necessarily his and from which it would have been hard for him to emancipate himself. Thus he was able to look at things closely, with neither the biases of party allegiance, positive religion, or patriotism, nor any mitigation of his personal aggressive attitudes which might have been brought about by the diversion of interests to systems or abstractions. Thus, due to his distant position as a satirist, it is not in Kraus, but in his writings that we find a picture of his time. Kraus

[1] What makes me feel anxious? / What is to happen to me? / . . . Sleep, save me from death. *Worte in Versen*, II, 22.

[2] I stand banned to this spot / And cannot recede and cannot move / And seek with thrice pleading hands / To turn away a certain fate. . . . How the door turns and threatens me and / How it creaks, / How the hour runs in its mad course / . . .
And folds and edges stare at me, / Fate's most miserable serf! / . . . *Ibid.*, p. 63.

was motivated by basic human values which he applied with passion to the phenomena of his time. Rather than side with current ideologies or ready-made systems of thought, he struggled to find ways of thinking which would restore immediacy to the relationships between these basic values and the phenomena he criticized. Inevitably his thinking had to appear as that of an individualist, and was exposed to the suspicion that often his deviations from contemporary thought occurred for the sake of nonconformism rather than for the sake of thought itself. It has often been demonstrated that the eagerness of his satiric temperament not rarely lent support to this suspicion. However, a passage can hardly be found in Kraus which is wholly unrelatable to the fundamental values which were at the same time his and those of his actions.

Kraus's idea of himself as a judge. In accordance with this theory of his superiority Kraus set himself an impossible task. Assuming that he was "right" and everyone else "wrong" in varying degrees, he set himself up as the judge who, by pointing out individual mistakes of persons or groups, would be able gradually to point out the "right" road for mankind. He not only had no program but was even opposed to one on principle. That would have been tantamount to creating a party, a side, and thus not standing in the center of truth.

Prophecies. His self-imposed role of monitor and his oral approach make it understandable that the word "prophet" should have been used by Kraus's admirers to describe him. He also has often been called a prophet, in the literal sense of having prophesied the horrible events which took place later. Thus in the essay "Timons Mahl" (Timon's Meal) he spoke of the terrible reality in Austria which exceeded all satire to such an extent that satire no longer had any function:

> Die umfassende Erkenntnis des Bankrotts der Freiheit ... das Gefühl von der Unabwendbarkeit eines Troglodytenaufstandes, der das Opfer von zehn Millionen eines Weltkrieges zum Hohn machen wird ...[1]

Often Kraus was not believed when he predicted dire future events from signs which seemed insignificant to others. Thus as early as *Sprüche und Widersprüche* he said:

> Pest und Erdbeben sind grosse Themen. Wie kleinlich, Gliederreissen als Symptom der Pest zu erkennen und sich bei einer Trübung des Quellwassers

[1] The comprehensive recognition of the bankrupcy of freedom ... the feeling of the unavoidability of an insurrection of the troglodytes which will make the sacrifice of ten million in the World War seem a mockery ... *Untergang*, p. 31.

aufzuhalten, die ein Erdbeben anzeigt! Wie kleinlich, den Weltekel zu fühlen, wenn ein Schmock vorübergeht.[1]

Kraus's basic motivation. Theodor Lessing mentioned what I believe to be the basic motivation of Kraus's work; this was his restlessness, which arose out of the conflict between his realization of what he was and his ideal of a superior life.

This conflict was intensified by his position as a Viennese Jew who lived in an unnaturally isolated upper middle-class environment, hated by the outside world. Then there are the main facts of his childhood and family, about which we learn almost nothing from himself. Kraus was probably quite isolated from the general population as a small German-speaking child in the Czech town of Jičín, with its particularly strong Czech national-cultural tradition. Perhaps he also sensed the hatred which was bound to arise against his father, a clever businessman, a self-made man who had made a fortune by employing the inmates of the nearby prison for low wages. Let us also keep in mind that Kraus was a very delicate child whose crooked spine had already at a very early age helped to isolate him and make him feel self-conscious. Kraus's work, a running commentary on his adult life, gives no evidence that he was ever truly at peace with himself.

Kraus's purpose. Kraus's purpose, as he himself expressed it quite frequently, stayed amazingly constant thoughout his life, considering how much his style, topics and form of writing changed in the thirty-seven years of the publication of *Die Fackel.* At the beginning of April, 1899, he announced in the first issue that there would be

... kein tönendes "Was wir bringen," aber ein ehrliches "Was wir umbringen." ...Was hier geplant wird, ist nichts als eine Trockenlegung des weiten Phrasensumpfes ...[2]

This could very well be the motto of Kraus's life work. Sometimes, and especially in the first few years of publication, his aspirations seemed toned down considerably, so as to tend more toward adherence to such policy statements as that of *Die Fackel,* 14 (August 1899), where he claimed that he merely wanted to give his own views and evaluations of appearances in the various areas of public life. His work, neverthe-

[1] Pestilence and earthquake are great themes. How petty, to recognize the symptoms of pestilence in the aching of limbs and to stop over some impurities in well water which warn of an earthquake! How petty to feel nauseated about the world when a snob walks by. *Sprüche und Widersprüche,* p. 243.

[2] No resounding "What we bring," but an honest "What we kill" ... What is being planned here is nothing but the drying up of a large swamp of phrases ... *Die Fackel,* 1 (Anfang April 1899), 1f.

less, corresponded in general to the more radical program. In fact, in contrast to most writers, Kraus became more extreme, or perhaps it would be better to say less tolerant, as time went on. He often referred to the motives for his work, convinced that every sphere of the world made itself known in its essence when it came in contact with him:

> Wie alles zudrängt, dass es sich mir binde!
> Wie sucht mich alles, dass ich eines finde! [1]

> ... Und dass es Wort zu Wort sich mir gestaltet ... [2]

Phrases similar to this appeared again and again, suggesting as it were that he reacted to impressions independently of his own volition. It seems that Kraus here did not see his task as that of a fighter against evils but merely as that of a synthesizing analyst. In the most idealized interpretation of his work, Kraus said:

> ... ich habe mein ganzes Leben lang nichts anderes geschrieben als Dinge, durch die ein ideales Ziel im Menschlichen an der Unvollkommenheit des Vaterländischen gefördert wird ... [3]

There are many passages in Kraus's work which may be interpreted as his summaries of his own work, such as:

> Geschlecht und Lüge, Dummheit, Übelstände,
> Tonfall und Phrase, Tinte, Technik, Tod,
> Krieg und Gesellschaft, Wucher, Politik,
> der Übermut des Ämter und die Schmach,
> die Unwert schweigendem Verdienst erweist,
> Kunst und Natur, die Liebe und der Traum,
> vielfacher Antrieb, sei's woher es sei,
> der Schöpfung ihre Ehre zu erstatten! [4]

Revolt against the unbound intellect. One often inescapably gains the

[1] "How all crowds toward me, so that it might be formed by me! / How all seeks me, so that I should find one thing! *Worte in Versen*, IV, 66. Poem "Magie" (Magic).

[2] ... And that word after word creates itself for me .... *Die Fackel*, 649–56 (Anfang Juni 1924), 152.

[3] ... All my life I have written nothing but things through which an ideal human goal might be advanced by the imperfections of things pertaining to the homeland ... *Ibid.*, 781–86 (Anfang Juni 1928), 8f.

[4] Sex and lies, stupidity, bad situations, / Intonation and phrase, ink, technology and death, / War and society, usury, politics, / The presumptiousness of officialdom and disgrace / which comes to the silently meritorious from the worthless, / art and nature, love and dream, / multiple impetus, no matter from what source, / to do honor to creation! *Ibid.*, 508–13 (April 1919), 7.

impression, supported by the especially careful wording of Kraus's anti-rational phrases, that he was more interested in startling his readers than in communicating any profound convictions. It seems that he became increasingly fond of thinking in such "different" ways, thereby separating his path from others as much as possible: "Es ist so furchtbar schwer sich mit Leuten, die ihre fünf Sinne beisammen haben, zu verständigen ..." [1] A phrase which he used over and over again was "die intelligente Dummheit." [2]

The key to the understanding of such remarks lies in Kraus's belief that the more logically a man thought, the more directly and unscrupulously he would go after what he considered his own good. This, however, inevitably turned out to be bad for his fellow-man but also for himself. He therefore rejected discursive thinking, which he called logical, as an evil in itself: "Wir wollen nicht mehr, dass Geist und Notwendigkeit verkettet seien, weil's dann statt beider Krieg gibt ..." [3]

If Kraus considered the operetta the highest form of art, it was because fun was supreme there and logic, common sense, and even reality were subordinated to it. In the operetta satire was freest of restrictions.

Belittling reason, he looked down on knowledge with even more scorn since it, in Kraus's opinion, rarely served any purpose except as a tool of reason, usually to enhance the prestige of the latter. Knowledge did not improve *Geist* [4]; this could be seen from the many hollow heads through which knowledge had passed without leaving a trace. Knowledge was therefore not a matter of *Geist;* hence: "man soll nicht mehr lernen, als man unbedingt gegen das Leben braucht." [5] Similarly: "Wissen bringt die Kunst von Kräften, sie setzt Fett an ..." [6] He was convinced that true value had little to do with intellect and intellectuality. There was, therefore, likely to be some good in what the intellectuals scorned or hated. Kraus knew of a much finer tool than knowledge and that was *Ahnung*[7]: "... denn wer beim Wissen stehen geblieben ist, wo man geradezu ahnen kann, wird mit diesen Dingen ja doch nicht fertig."[8] And again, "Bildung und Logik reichen zu einem

[1] It is so terribly difficult to make oneself understood with people who have all five senses together ... *Untergang der Welt durch die schwarze Magie* (Wien, 1922), p. 461.

[2] Intelligent stupidity. *Ibid.*, p. 392.

[3] We no longer want spirit and necessity to be chained together, because that brings about war. (loose translation). *Die Fackel*, 514–18 (Ende Juli 1919), 34.

[4] Spirit, intellect. *Pro domo et mundo* (Leipzig: K. Wolff, 1919), p. 68.

[5] One should not learn more than one absolutely needs against life. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[6] Knowledge weakens art. It makes it put on fat ... *Die Fackel*, 279–80 (13. Mai 1909), 7.

[7] Something like intuition.

[8] Hein. Fischer, *Die Wage* (4. April 1919), p. 371. Quoting Karl Kraus: ... for whoever

tieferen Erfassen der Dinge nicht hin. Alle geistige Vertiefung ist die Wirkung einer Gemütsverfassung ..." [1] In keeping with these views his knowledge, even in fields in which he professed an interest, was actually very limited. That he preferred the Catholic appeal to the emotions through symbols to the more sober Protestant appeal to reason can be seen in the following statement, one of the few favourable ones about Catholicism in his work, regarding the mysterious and the frightful: "... mit den Schauern ist die Schönheit vertrieben und der junge Geist steht vor der Kalkwand des protestantischen Himmels ..." [2] Kraus saw no need for theoretical reasoning even when there was no danger of its being used in the service of the profit motif: "Über Zeit und Raum wird so geschrieben, als ob es Dinge wären, die im praktischen Leben noch keine Anwendung gefunden haben." [3] To him, logical reasoning was especially suspect when its purpose was not definitely ethical. His[4] anti-rational tendency reached its climax in the famous *Fackel* of 1934,[5] where the *leitmotiv*, "Down with the intellectuals!" was repeated in a thousand different ways. Nowhere, however, did Kraus set down his anti-rational views more eloquently than in writings dated as early as 1912:

> ... Die durch Verbreitung des Wissens bewirkte Geistesschwäche verlangt die Vormundschaft, auch wenn ihre politischen Missbraucher ihr Selbständigkeit und Hass gegen jede Führung einimpfen ... Die Aufklärung, die alles aufklärt, was ihr verschlossen bleibt, lehre uns den Inhalt der Finsternis lieben. Seid Christen aus Notwehr! Glaubet an Kraft, wo sich die Schwäche analytisch rächt, an Seele, wo nicht Raum ist für Psychologie! Salbt euch mit den Vorurteilen, deren Wunderkraft die Urteilsfähigkeit bezweifelt. Geweiht sei jedes Wasser, von dem die Wissenschaft sagt, es sei H_2O mit Bazillen ...[6]

The spread of knowledge had impaired the independence of *Geist* but

has stopped at knowledge when one can actually have intuition will never be able to master these things.

[1] Education and logic are not sufficient for the deeper grasping of things. All spiritual penetration is the result of an emotional state ... *Die Fackel*, 33 (Ende Februar 1900), 4.

[2] ... With dread, beauty has been driven away, and the young spirit stands before the whitewashed wall of the Protestant heaven ... *Sprüche*, p. 117.

[3] People write about time and space as if they were things which have not yet found any application in practical life. *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 59.

[4] *Die Fackel*, 70 (Anfang März 1901), 7.

[5] *Ibid.*, 890–905 (Ende Juli 1934).

[6] The feeblemindedness caused by the spread of knowledge needs guardianship, no matter how much its political exploiters inocculate it with a desire for independence, and hatred for any kind of leadership ... may the enlightenment which sheds light on anything that remains a closed book to it teach us to love the content of darkness. Be Christians in self-defense! Believe in strength where weakness takes analytic revenge, believe in the soul where there is no room for psychology! Anoint yourselves with prejudices on the magic powers of which intelligent judgment casts doubt. Blessed be all the water of which science says that it is H_2O with bacilli ... *Ibid.*, 391–(29 .August 1912), 70f.

had, on the other hand, incited man to reject all authority. Thus the only value of enlightenment lay in having taught man how to appreciate the understanding which one can gain in darkness. Christianity could lead man away from the fallacy at which some arrived through reasoning, that one could calculate one's way to happiness. Souls could only be strong if they rejected psychology, the analytic instrument of weaklings. It was better to be accused of prejudices than to let common sense interfere with one's ability to marvel at the wonders of the world. Concerning a sociologist he remarked: "... Wenn er durch den Garten ging, welkten die Glockenblumen ..." [1] and concluded "... Gott, wo bist du ... Intelligenz verbrennt nicht; sie stinkt nur zum Himmel!" [2]

Art especially had to be guarded from the "Weltbestie Intelligenz," a mere cloak for the philistine which destroyed the artist by infesting the world with the spirit of barter.[3] Therefore art no longer shaped and recreated the world; science had taken its place. It produced so-called cultured people whose culture was no broader than that of a factory worker who spent his life turning the self-same screw. At best, science could only confirm what the artistic mind had found to be true through experience. If science went beyond the practical function of confirmation, which is of questionable value, it could only be destructive. In Kraus's own time and in his own city of Vienna, Kraus felt that science even dared to reduce dreams, some of man's most cherished possessions, to dirt.[4] Kraus found his view of science formulated clearly by H. S. Chamberlain. In an article called "Die 'katholischen' Universitäten," [5] Chamberlain explained that unbiased science, namely that without a metaphysical background, was a monstrosity. According to Chamberlain, every culture grew in its own way; its freedom was the freedom of development according to its own laws. Jews were characterized by unbiased *Voraussetzungslosigkeit* (lack of presuppositions), and therefore had no place in German science and culture.

Science and reason could only give men clues about the factual structure of the universe; they could not tell them anything about values. Reason was merely the means to certain subjective ends, a tool by which man could achieve any sort of goal, but it was not an epistemological guide towards the good. While this was not expressed, it was

[1] When he walked through a garden, the bluebells wilted ... *Die Fackel*, 70 (Anfang März 1901), p. 71.

[2] God, where art thou ... intelligence doesn't burn; it only smells to heaven! *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[3] *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 111.

[4] Cf. *Traumstück* (Wien–Leipzig: 1923), 14ff.

[5] H. S. Chamberlain, "Die katholischen Universitäten," *Die Fackel*, 92 (Mitte Jänner 1902), 1ff.

implied in Kraus's belief that the cynicism of the modern age in regard to values was due to its excessive use of reason. Similarly in *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* he showed the spirit of the profit-minded, who reasoned for their own purposes and viewed the horrors of the war unimaginatively; their reasoning was identical with scheming. Kraus thought that truth was known only through "*Ahnung,*" the immediate intuitive knowledge which alone could give an insight into real values. Having lost all mysticism, the modern age knew only of relative values, and this made possible its subordination to the economic end of man and to big business. Imagination was the only check against the barbarism of modern man who, daring to analyze all human values, was able to cheapen human life and discount any idea of human dignity. Kraus rejected not merely the power of reason, but also the value of knowledge and enlightenment. The modern age was the most enlightened and yet the most brutal and banal, hence faith in man's will becoming better through increased enlightenment and education was erroneous. Goodness depended on human intention and always had to be based on faith in the dimension of free will, expressing itself by the spontaneous call of conscience innate in man.

Rejection of the economic view of man. Kraus also rejected the economic view of man. Utilitarianism, nineteenth century science, Darwinism, and Marxism saw the economic factor as of prime importance to man and as the motivator of human actions. Capitalism saw the accumulation of wealth for its own sake as the end of man's endeavor. Thus man was not recognized in his totality. The economic for Kraus was always a means toward life, a *Lebensmittel,* which could have no existential relation to the essential, true man. Modern man, through his greed and evil nature, had made the means of life the end of life, thus emptying it of meaning. It was for this reason that Kraus rejected the capitalist system which, as the systematization of greed, was basically evil, and world-destructive. It was on this distrust of capitalism that Kraus's distrust of the middle class, the bearer of the capitalist system, rested.

In addition to these factors, it was technology which had precipitated the crisis of modern civilization and given it its peculiar character. The development of technology depended on two anti-moral forces, the rise of capitalism and that of science which were means for the expression of the evil side of man and the gathering of wealth for its own sake. The danger of technology for man consisted in its being the tool of radically evil man at a time when he had reached the very depth of his perversity

by the destruction of the traditional values. Man, possessed by the capitalistic spirit, had become the slave of his tools, upon which he was becoming progressively more dependent for the production of the means of life. Devoid of any understanding of the meaning of life, modern civilization headed inevitably toward self-annihilation. Kraus was opposed to the commercial character of contemporary culture for the essential reason that it degraded man. He tried to show how all the arts, the sciences, and religion had succumbed to the economic instruments of living.

This critique was accompanied in Kraus by a strongly conservative note, embodying identification with the pre-capitalistic world, and especially with the Austrian *Vormärz*, its philosophy of life, its artistic creations, and its political organization.

Since Kraus was generally opposed to innovation and change, it is not surprising that he was a pessimist with regard to the possibility of moral progress. Whenever he mentioned progress, he did so disparagingly, with nothing but scientific and technical progress in mind. Such progress brought about the mechanization and industrialization of all means of production, which in turn were necessarily followed by the depersonalization of human relationships, be they those of employer and employee, or those between killer and victim in war. People then tended to see each other not as isolated individuals who were to be judged on their own merits but as units composing "the masses," to be considered only as raw material for the calculation of statistical averages. Their inner lives became uninteresting; they could almost be figured out. When the newspaper which the individual read, and his job on the assembly line were known, he could also be influenced and used.

Technology. Kraus saw everywhere the subjection of man to the machine.[1] While heroism had become impossible, the mere mechanics of living had become not less subject to mishaps, but more so. Ships were not being built with the primary purpose of transporting people and goods safely, but with the aim of producing the fastest and most

[1] Only relatively late in his life did Kraus say: "Wie? Die Menschheit verdummt zugunsten des maschinellen Fortschrittes, und wir sollten uns diesen nicht einmal zunutze machen? Sollten mit der Dummheit Zwiesprache halten, wenn wir ihr im Automobil entfliehen können?" (Why, mankind turns stupid because of industrial progress, and we shouldn't even make use of it? We should converse with stupidity when we can flee it by automobile?) (*Sprüche*, p. 91). And in this connection: "Maschinelles Leben fördert, künstlerische Umgebung lähmt die innere Poesie." (Life among machines advances inner poetry, artistic surroundings paralyze it). (*Ibid.*, p. 91). It seems however, that Kraus trusted none but himself to be able to use the innovations of technology merely as a means to purer enjoyment of true values.

gigantic ships possible. The *Titanic* was praised as a wonder of technology in spite of the fact that seventeen hundred people were drowned with it. It was nature, God, that undid the blasphemous work of man, but through his press man continued to praise the perfectly functioning *Titanic* telegraph service and the rich survivors whose soap advertisements reached to the top of the Alps.

Kraus understood that the original purpose of technology, as a means to an end, had been forgotten long ago and what was left was only a neurotic and hectic striving with no time to think about the end. The role of the soul decreased, and so did the number of those who still had an inner life.

The machine had become the superstition of modern life; it made life difficult, but still was extolled as if it were something worth suffering for. Man's life grew more complicated since the innovations had become needs he could not do without; and thus man came to be a mere wheel among many mechanical ones. His mind was no longer able to arrange the outside world meaningfully. Thus, Kraus foresaw, years before the First World War, the apocalyptic red horseman, *Technology*, who would involve Germany in a war in which brothers would strangle each other. This was the most glaring effect of technology for its own sake; if armaments were made without a purpose, the obvious purpose would be found.

... die Welt ... ist sie im Innern so befriedigt, dass sie auf Eroberungen ausgehen kann? [1]

Der Fortschritt ... versichert allen kriechenden Geistern, dass er die Natur beherrsche. Er belästigt sie und sagt, er habe sie erobert. Er hat Moral und Maschine erfunden, um den Menschen die Natur auszutreiben, und fühlt sich geborgen in einem Bau der Welt, den Hysterie und Komfort zusammenhalten. Der Fortschritt feiert Pyrrhussiege über die Natur ... Als der Mensch mit der Postkutsche reiste, kam die Welt besser fort, als da der Kommis durch die Luft fliegt. Was nützt das Tempo, wenn unterwegs das Gehirn ausgeronnen ist?[2]

Und eines Tages wird sich die Menschheit für die grossen Werke, die sie zu ihrer Erleichterung geschaffen hat, aufgeopfert haben.[3]

[1] ... The world ... is it inwardly so satisfied that it can look for conquests? *Die chinesische Mauer*, p. 322.

[2] Progress ... assures all creeping spirits that it controls nature. Progress molests nature and says that it has conquered it. Progress has invented morality and machines in order to drive nature out of man, and feels safe in a world-structure which is held together by hysteria and conveniences. It celebrates pyrrhic victories over nature ... When man traveled by stage coach, the world went better than now that the shop assistant travels through the air. What use is the speed if the brains flow out along the way? *Ibid.*, pp. 423f.

[3] And one day mankind will have sacrificed itself for the great works which it has created for its comfort. *Sprüche*, p. 93.

Wir können von Schmockwitz nach Schweifwedel telephonisch sprechen und wissen noch nicht, wie der Fortschritt aussieht. Wir wissen bloss, dass er auf die Qualität der Ferngespräche keinen Einfluss genommen hat, und wenn wir einmal so weit halten werden, dass man zwischen Wien und Berlin Gedanken übertragen wird, so wird es nur an den Gedanken liegen ...[1]

Die Menschheit ... braucht ihr geistiges Kapital für ihre Erfindungen auf und behält nichts für deren Betrieb... [2]

Kraus was convinced that there was a connection between the relatively primitive state of technology at the time of the German classic poets and the advanced technical means which were to aid the mediocrities of his own time in producing their works.[3]

He was proud, therefore, of never having written with anything but one and the same pen for the last thirty years; [4] he scorned those who called themselves poets and dictated their poetry to a typist:

Fortschritt

Mit Gänsekiel, vor Lampendocht,
und dennoch haben sie's vermocht
und waren deutsche Dichter.
Von euch wird, was nicht in euch drin,
diktiert in eine Schreibmaschin',
elektrisches Gelichter! [5]

The loss of imagination. The most detrimental effect of the machine, especially obvious in war, was the loss of man's most precious attribute, imagination. Imagination, which was able to transcend the visible, was irretrievably lost at a time when man became used to reading of horrors which he had never dared to imagine. He read of millions of dead people, and his imagination did not frighten him by showing him a single dead man. There was, however, not one definite loss of imagination; what was especially horrible to Kraus was the continuation

[1] We can telephone from Timbuktu to Hindustan, and don't know what progress looks like. We only know that it has had no influence on the quality of the long-distance calls, and once we reach the point of being able to send mental messages between Vienna and Berlin, the problem will only be one of the quality of the thoughts. *Die chinesische Mauer*, pp. 306f.

[2] Mankind ... uses up its mental capital for its inventions and keeps nothing for their operation ... *Ibid.*, p. 307.

[3] *Nachts* (Wien-Leipzig, 1919), p. 72.

[4] *Die Fackel*, 726–29 (7. Juni 1926), 57.

[5] Progress. / With goosequill, before lamp wicks / And yet they were able to do it / and were German poets. / By you that which isn't in you / is dictated into a typewriter / you electrical scum! *Epigramme*, p. 28.

of the downward development after the war: "die Tragik der von der Vorstellungsarmut in den Tod gepeitschten Menschheit..."[1]

Kraus had no hope of achieving the one thing which could save mankind:

> Es wäre mithin zum inneren Aufbau der Welt unerlässlich, ihr das wahre Rückgrat des Lebens, die Phantasie, zu stärken. Dies könnte nur gelingen, indem die Notwendigkeit bereinigt und also der Menschengeist von der Befassung mit ihr erlöst, zugleich aber auch der Zustrom aus den falschen Quellen eines papierenen Lebens gehemmt wird.[2]

To accept others' written thoughts as constituting the essence of their lives, and thus to feel that one had acquired much with little trouble, was pure self-deception. In that way one's imagination was weakened, and one became incapable of experiencing creatively and directly.[3] Kraus remarked that the heirs of his generation would no longer have the intelligence required to press the buttons to set their gadgets in motion. All the sacrifices made to combat this development have been in vain.[4]

The arrogance of the mediocre. An increasing arrogance had taken the place of reverence; everything seemed insignificant when compared with the great advances of the modern age. To Kraus, the pseudo-intellectuals were most guilty of this arrogance, as they were, indeed, of almost all evils. Mankind, he felt, which grins about art, books and God, ought to be shocked to the point where it would again see its political achievements and technological progress as problematic.

Kraus did not think of individual man as responsible for this development, but blamed him collectively for having had the will to create the machine which took away his will, while on the other hand one could not prove that horses had any part in the technological development which increased their slavery.

Man had lost all contact with the mysterious and indeed with everything which could not be transmitted *in toto* in Morse code.

The plight of contemporary culture. Kraus was keenly aware of the fact that culture was culture only as long as its purpose rested within it-

[1] The tragedy of mankind whipped to death by its own lack of imagination ... *Die Fackel*, 781–86 (Anfang Juni 1928), 3.

[2] It would thus be essential for the inner reconstruction of the world to strengthen its imagination, the true backbone of life. In this one would only succeed by doing away with necessity, so that the human spirit would be freed of the need to occupy itself with it, and at the same time the flow from the false sources of a paper existence would be stopped. *Ibid.*, 519–20 (Mitte November 1919), 1.

[3] *Die chinesische Mauer*, p. 398.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 426.

[5] *Untergang*, p. 129.

self; those who represented it should not have become aware of their responsibility as *Kulturträger* (bearers of culture), and therefore have realized their commercial possibilities. Kraus's own life span, however, fell in the period when the tendencies in the direction of the commercialization of culture were becoming alarmingly pronounced. In his mind, the representatives of culture had prostituted their convictions so that they were associated primarily with advertisements for cigars and shaving cream. This tendency reached its climax in advertisements like the one showing a picture of Nietzsche with the legend:

> Das Leben es ist kurz und mies,
> mit "Berson" wird's zum Paradies! [1]

Citing a map of Italy, distributed by a travel bureau, which advertised the cultural monuments of Italy very much as one would advertise any consumers' goods, Kraus showed how all values had become commodities and man had become the appendage of the business man.

Kraus's work must be understood as a critique of contemporary civilization, from a particularly Austrian point of view, and with special emphasis on Austria. He saw a clear downward trend in the cultural development of Austria, "von Schwind bis Schönpflug, von Lanner bis Lehár.[2] The republic did not change matters for the better. On the contrary, the new form still contained the old state of affairs; in fact, the new political situation made little difference in view of the Austrians' stubborn adherence to their old beliefs and ideals:

> Diesem Staat drängt die Ehrlosigkeit aus allen Poren. Er hat aus der Verlassenschaft der Monarchie nichts übernommen als die Schande, unter der sie zusammengebrochen ist, und er lebt von dem Vergnügen ... diese Identität des der Welt unverlorenen Antlitzes in jedem Zug nachweisen zu können, sich dauernd in den letzten Zügen jenes Monstrums wiederzuerkennen ...[3]

Kraus believed he saw typically Austrian phenomena in almost everything he critized, be it the posthumous worship of the old emperor's beard, the celebration of a "Kralikstag," which honored the mediocre Austrian historian with the self-appointed task of glorifying the old

[1] Life is short and ugly / With "Berson" it becomes a paradise! (Berson was a brand of shoe soles). *Ibid.*, 391–92 (21. Januar 1914), 6.

[2] From Schwind to Schönpflug, from Lanner to Lehár. *Ibid.*, 501–7 (25 Januar 1919), 7.

[3] This state's lack of character oozes out of all its pores. It has taken over as its heritage from the monarchy nothing but the disgrace under which it collapsed, and lives on the enjoyment of being able to prove this identity in every feature of the face which has not been lost to the world, and to recognize itself in the dying features of that monster ... *Ibid.*, 608–12 (Ende Dezember 1922), 1.

monarchy and the Roman Catholic Church,[1] or the "Piusbrüder" [2] and "Cherusker," [3] tied together by the lack of everything and by the envy of Jewish talent. To idealize one's own shortcomings was typically Austrian. Austrian blood, hearts, countrysides, women, pastries and even water – all seemed to exist only for the tourist trade, and were exhibited for sale. Where else would a musician advertise frying pans with songs? Only in Austria would a war profiteer advertise that he wanted to buy objects of art for two million crowns, or the general population buy a miniature military grave as a decorative souvenir holder.

It was especially the modern operetta of Kalmán and Lehár which spoiled the taste of the people. There was no need for straining one's imagination or one's intelligence: *Die lustige Witwe* (The Merry Widow), *Friederike, Der Zigeunerbaron* (The Gypsy Baron), and the other operettas of the time were so well calculated to afford relaxation and to draw audiences to the box offices that Offenbach, Gilbert and Sullivan, Millöcker, and Suppé were bound to pass into oblivion. Yet Vienna was called the city of music because of its fifty thousand performances of *Die lustige Witwe*, and because of its cancan and jazz, despite the fact that the Viennese had let both Bedřich Smetana and Hugo Wolf starve, and had humiliated Anton Bruckner. Vienna, the city of theaters, had managed to ban Strindberg from its stages for "aesthetic and ethical reasons," but was itself under the spell of the hit song: "Ach Irma, ach Irma, dich liebt die ganze Firma!," [4] thus showing at once the individuality of its taste in love as well as in art.

Kraus's contemporaries were very proud of having among them so few illiterates. But what difference did it make, he asked, when there was nothing for the illiterate to miss? The cultural peaks of other nations might have been lower, but their general level was higher. What good were Goethe and Beethoven if they were of no importance except as aids to the hotel business at their respective anniversary celebrations? It was of no use to anyone to know how to spell the name of Walther von der Vogelweide if he was humanly below the level necessary to appreciate him. Kraus also ridiculed the hypocritical outcries for the preservation in Austria of tapestries which were to be sold after the war in exchange for grain; as a matter of fact, these "enthusiasts" had never seen the tapestries. People who claimed that

[1] *Ibid.*, 601–7 (November 1922), 108ff.
[2] Members of a Catholic fraternal organization.
[3] Members of an organization which glorified the Germanic descent of its members.
[4] Oh Irma, oh Irma, the whole firm loves you! *Weltgericht* (Leipzig, 1919), II, 78.

Goethe and Beethoven were living examples to them actually showed in every word they wrote or spoke that this was very far from true.[1] Those who still insisted that the intellectual and spiritual heroes ordinarily had a strong popular hold, but saw that the opposite was currently true, took as an excuse the fact that there was a war. Kraus again objected:

Aber man wende nicht ein, dass Krieg Krieg sei. Wenn das Volk Goethes nicht schon im Frieden gelogen hätte, so hätte es ruhig zugegeben, dass es Geibel für einen weit grösseren Dichter hält ...[2]

If the people had known the most elementary things about Goethe, their elite could not have chosen *Goethebund* as a name for their society for the preservation of morals.

Kraus believed that true culture could exist only in a society which did not feel embarrassed about speaking frankly about business. Thus, for instance, it seemed to him that in England where business was actually labeled as business, anything that was presented as culture could be trusted as such, the description of the English as a "nation of businessmen" by the Germans, those "idealists of export," notwithstanding.[3]

Pessimism concerning man. Kraus also questioned nineteenth century optimism about the nature of man. Kraus discounted the idea that man could find good through reason. Although he did not consider himself a religious Christian, his view of man resembled the Christian doctrine with its emphasis on the finitude and radical perversity of man. The basic motivation of man was greed, which expressed itself primarily in lust for wealth and power, and was accompanied by basically destructive and sadistic tendencies. In *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit,* Kraus portrayed a generation in which these drives were allowed to operate without any inhibiting ideological or moral barriers. There were business men scrambling for economic gain and officers subordinating their fellow men for power and killing for the delight of killing.

Whereas the Christian doctrine saw man as made in the image of God, and therefore possibly capable of salvation, standing beyond the murk of lust, for Kraus modern man was a monstrosity, hardly capable of a meaningful life any more. Reason and modern science had destroyed

[1] *Die Fackel,* 657–67 (August 1924), 214ff.

[2] But may no one object and say that war is war. If the nation had not already lied in peace time, it would have had to admit that it considers Geibel a much greater poet ... *Ibid.,* 519–20 (Mitte November 1919), 10f.

[3] *Nachts* p. 138.

all moral and religious barriers which had formerly checked the total expression of human nature.

Rejection of liberalism. This view naturally led Kraus to the rejection of the political institutions based upon an optimistic view of man. Liberalism, rooted in English natural law theory, assumed the goodness of man in calling for limitations on government. The period of Franz Joseph, in contrast to the Austrian *Vormärz* cherished by Kraus, was the period of ascending liberalism. By lifting all the conventional, political and cultural checks on man, liberalism made possible the free and total exercise of his perversity. Kraus therefore usually, but by no means consistently, felt driven to a conclusion similar to that of Catholic authoritarianism, namely, that strict government was a necessary political check against the basic sinfulness of man. In the modern age, however, Kraus only found rulers who, themselves deeply evil and unaware of their duty, like the Nazis, transformed such a government into the systematic expression of greed.

I have shown how Kraus's reaction to liberalism, parliamentary institutions, constitutional guarantees, and democracy was completely negative. His antagonism towards the press and his opposition toward freedom of the press, with his actual advocacy of state control, were expressions of the same pessimistic view of modern man as well as of his opposition to enlightenment and of his fear of the control of a commercially-motivated press over the popular mind.

Kraus's pessimism concerning human nature was shared by an increasing segment of intellectual opinion in the century. Dostoevsky's characters, Nietzsche, and Darwin's idea of the struggle for survival had foreshadowed the pessimistic belief that man was not merely irrational but violent, an idea similar to those which later influenced various European political movements. Twentieth-century psychology, especially Freudianism, had seen in man certain violent and destructive tendencies, sadism and masochism. The theory of progress had contained a basically optimistic view of man as ultimately, even if through struggle, reaching wisdom or the abolition of struggle and becoming at every consecutive stage basically wiser and more humane. This, however, was rejected by interpretations of history such as those of Max Weber or Oswald Spengler who drew a careful distinction similar to that of Kraus. This was the distinction between cultural and civilizational progress, which conceded that man's society might become more complex and in coping with nature his knowledge might advance, but the knowledge of human values and man's goodness would

remain in unchanged.

Religion. Kraus's comments on religion were largely restricted to organized religion.[1] His religious conceptions were not theological, nor was there any evidence of strong, positive religion in his work. His recommendation of the acceptance of Catholicism as a means to an end appears rather to indicate the opposite. It seems most likely that, like most Viennese intellectuals of his day, he viewed religion as something *passé*, but nevertheless possessed of an occasionally attractive quaintness and *naiveté*, as for example in the case of Dolfuss and "seine rührende Frömmigkeit." [2]

By far the most frequent were Kraus's references to religion in its non-spiritual aspects, such as, for instance, the following paragraph about the relation of religion to politics. It is especially interesting because, written at the very outset of his career as writer of *Die Fackel*, it can be considered part of Kraus's outline of his basic convictions:

> ... Von berufener Seite wird der "Los-von-Rom"-Bewegung keine Bedeutung beigemessen, weil sie keine religiöse, sondern eine politische sei und weil an dem Übertritte solch lauer Gläubiger weder die eine Kirche gewinne, noch die andere etwas verliere. Als ob man überhaupt in der Geschichte die religiösen Momente von den politischen trennen könnte, als ob die Bewegung des Islams, des Hussitismus, der dreissigjährige Krieg und die Gegenreformation wegen des Vorwiegens politischer Elemente an Bedeutung verloren hätten. Man denke an die Erblichkeit des religiösen Bekenntnisses ... dass Generationen überzeugter Gläubiger dem andern Bekenntnisse, dem sie durch den Zufall der Geburt anheimfielen, zugute kommen werden ...[3]

Kraus never gave an actual testimony of his religious beliefs. His references to God in his poetry may be nothing more than conventional poetic devices, since his poetry was rather traditional in other respects as well. The references are similar to the use of the names of mythological gods by many other authors. It seems that Kraus was not interested in arguments either for or against religion but rather in the phenomenon of religiosity. Christianity was to the Austrian Kraus practically identical with Catholicism, and hence his references to

[1] Cf. chaps. IV and V.

[2] His moving piety. Cf. Mrs. Helene Kann's manuscript, p. 195 above.

[3] ... A reliable source attributes no significance to the "away-from-Rome-movement," because it is supposedly not religious, but political, and because the conversion of such lukewarm believers constitutes neither a gain for the one Church, not a loss for the other. As if one could separate the religious factors from the political ones at all in history, as if the movement of Islam, of Hussitism, the Thirty Years' War and the Counter Reformation had lost significance because of the preponderance of political elements. Let us think of the hereditary aspect of the religious confession ... that generations of convinced faithful will benefit the other religion because of the accident of their birth ... *Die Fackel*, 3 (Ende April 1899), 11.

Christianity were almost always limited to Catholicism. His statements about the Roman Catholic Church were negative practically at all times, regardless of whether or not he was officially a member at the time. Most of his views about subjects with which the Catholic Church also concerned itself were, expressly or by implication, contrary to those of the Church. He frequently attacked it directly because of its negative attitude toward birth control and abortion. Kraus considered it absurd to permit a child to be born unwanted into misery, when, in his opinion, it could not be sinful to interrupt its development at a time when it was not yet a conscious being and the mother could not yet have any instinctive feelings about it. Once he described very much in detail the inhuman and nonsensical baptism of unborn children who were expected to die while still in the womb.[1]

It even seems that he considered the need for religion, or at least the need for being a member of an established religion, a sign of weakness. Therefore he remarked jokingly that a culture at the end of its resources calls the priest,[2] and that his contemporaries who had proven themselves to be so feeble-minded by their great faith in science really deserved to be put under the quardianship of the Church.[3] He respected the priesthood as little as he did the Church, believing it to be more interested in outward lip service than in genuine devotion.[4] Finally, any compliment he ever paid the Church was purely negative, as, for example, when he said that Catholicism was good as a counterpoison against the corrupt Jewish influence.[5]

It seems fairly certain that the possibility of being a Jew religiously never entered Kraus's mind. In this respect he was very much like most of the educated upper-middle-class Jews of his time in Vienna. In fact, the assumption that Kraus might ever have spiritually identified himself with an established church or with any comparable group would be entirely counter to his character. It was, in fact, only in his early years that he spoke about religion at all. Later, it is true, the word "God" occurred more frequently in his poetry, but even then God seems to have been to him only the impersonal source of beauty in nature and language. Strangely in view of his later skepticism with regard to reason, in his only theoretical article about religion, in a very early

[1] *Ibid.*, 221 (9. März 1907), 2f.
[2] *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 149.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 148.
[4] *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität*, p. 254.
[5] *Die Fackel*, 33 (Ende Februar 1900), 20.

Fackel, he protested outright against religion on grounds of its being against reason:

Uns scheint der klaffende Abgrund zwischen dem Glauben *aller* Offenbarungsreligionen und dem Wissen der Zeit gleich unüberbrückbar ...[1]

It was, in fact, impossible for the young Kraus to make any decisions without mobilizing the whole arsenal of knowledge at his dispos al and checking it against faith. He scorned the Reform Jews and, by implication, those Protestants who tried to arrive at a synthesis between religion and reason, where the acceptance of the latter was unavoidable:

Dringt er nicht bis zu den letzten Konsequenzen der reinen Erkenntnis durch, so bleibt all seine freie Religion ein jämmerliches (sic) Kompromiss, das den ärmsten Köhler um die Festigkeit und Einheitlichkeit demütigen Glaubens beneiden darf. [2]

What resulted was, in his opinion, a semi-enlightenment: "... eine über ein paar Vorurteile spöttelnde, andere ängstlich bewahrende Religion ... Eingeimpfter Kinderglaube, modisch zugelassener Unglaube – sie wiegen gleich." [3] The *laissez-faire* of liberalism, the nucleus of most of that semi-enlightenment, made most headway among Jews and Protestants. Emptyheadedly and arrogantly they took over the results of other people's spiritual struggles and boastfully rejoiced at having escaped the ceremoniousness of approved religions. At any rate, to Kraus, "enlightened religion" was something marking a compromise step away from religion. It was hypocritical to pretend that one had reconciled religion with reason. Religions, i.e. organized religions, had more or fewer *Verstandesunmöglichkeiten* (elements not acceptable to reason), but could never satisfy the critical mind. In 1899, when Kraus launched his *Fackel,* this was truer than ever, because that was the time when science was at its peak and metaphysics at the opposite pole.

Kraus never expressed himself clearly as to his own wanderings in 1898 from the Jewish community to the Catholic Church which he left after the First World War. Only after taking the third and last step did

[1] It seems to us that the gaping abyss between the faiths of *any* revealed religions on the one hand, and the knowledge of the time on the other is equally impossible to bridge ... *Ibid.,* 17 (Mitte September 1899), 16.

[2] If it doesn't penetrate to the last consequences of pure knowledge, all his free religion remains a miserable compromise, so that he may envy the poorest collier the firmness and single-mindedness of his humble faith. *Ibid.*

[3] ... A religion which laughs at a few prejudices, but anxiously preserves others ... Faith inoculated in childhood, or fashionably admitted lack of faith – they are of equal value. *Ibid.,* p. 17.

he make a few remarks which also throw some interesting light on his attitude toward his Jewish origin:

... ob eine Kirche noch geschändet werden kann, die ... das Walten der giftigen Gase gesegnet und nach ihm die Muttergottes mit der Kriegsmedaille dekoriert hat. Wenn aber an dieser Kirche, aus der Gott schon ausgetreten sein dürfte, bevor sie den Welttheateragenten ihre Kulissen und den Komödianten ihren Weihrauch zur Verfügung stellte ... noch etwas zu schänden war, so dürfte es noch jener Altar sein, der den Herren Reinhardt, Moissi und Hofmannsthal (diesen tribus parvis impostoribus) als Versatzstück gedient hat, damit sie an ihm etwas verrichten, was ein blasphemer Hohn ist auf ... Menschheit ... Dorfkirchl hat zugeschaut, da ein alter Schwindler (Bahr), der schon dem Treiben dieser Zeitlichkeit entrückt ist und im Gebet noch etwas hinaufkommen will, sein Geschäftsbuch mit Gott einleitete, als Gebetbuch fortsetzte und hierauf als Tagebuch am Sonntag erscheinen liess ... eine Kirche, die derartige Greuel vor dem Herrn mit sich selbst geschehen liess und schlimmere, als sie je getan, je geduldet und gesegnet hat, sie hat es verwirkt ... So erkläre ich denn, in einer Gegenwart, in der nach dem Selbststurz der Throne die Altäre ins Chaos der Unehre gesunken sind und wo Hochamt und Grossmarkt in dem Einheitsbegriff jener "Messe" verschmelzen, die die Gelegenheit für Händler und Mysterienschwindler bedeutet ... dass ich einst die jüdische Glaubensgenossenschaft, in die ich durch den leidigen Zufall der Geburt geraten war, verlassen habe, um mich nach einer Zeit der bequemen und nie genug gewürdigten Konfessionslosigkeit von einem Teufel in den Schoss der alleinseligmachenden Kirche verführen lassen. Man mag mich verdammen, weil ich ohne einen zwingenden Grund, sei es der speziell in die katholische Richtung gewandte Glaube, sei es das häufigere Motiv politischen oder sozialen Strebens ... sie vollzogen habe. Warum ich es getan, ist weit mehr noch Privatsache, als die Religion selbst es zu sein pflegt. Aber wenn der Grund nur in dem Wunsch gelegen war, die letzte Gemeinsamkeit mit den Literaturschwindlern zu verlassen, so bin ich gestraft genug durch die Enttäuschung, sie eben dort wiederzufinden, wo ich mich vor ihnen zu bergen wähnte.[1]

[1] ... Whether a Church can still be desecrated which ... has blessed poisonous gasses, and afterward decorated the Mother of God with the Medal of War. But if there should still be anything left to desecrate about this Church which God probably left before it put its stage sets at the disposal of agents of the World Theater, and its incense at the disposal of comedians ... it could be that altar which served as a pawn to Messers Reinhardt, Moissi and Hofmannsthal – (to these poor impostors), so that they might carry out something in front of it which is a blasphemous mockery of ... mankind ... The little village church looked on (paraphrased from an article by Hermann Bahr) when an old swindler (Bahr) who is already removed from the hustle and bustle of thisworldliness, and still wants to get ahead a little in prayer, when Bahr prefaced his account book with "With God," continued it as a prayer book, and thereupon let it appear as a Sunday diary ... a Church which permits such abominations to the Lord to be done to itself, and worse ones than it has ever tolerated and blessed, it has lost the right ... So I declare then, in a presence in which after the self-inflicted collapse of the thrones the altars have fallen into chaos of dishonor, and where high mass and wholesale market are amalgamated in the one concept of "Messe" (In German the word means Mass as well as trade fair), which constitutes an opportunity for merchants and for swindlers using the mysteries of the Catholic Church ... that I once left the Jewish religious community in which I had found myself through the unfortunate accident of birth in order to let a devil seduce me, after a period of comfortable and never sufficiently valued non-affiliation, into the bosom of the true Church. One may condemn me because I did this without a compelling reason, such as specifically Catholic faith or the more frequent motive of political or social climbing might have been ... Why I did this is a private matter to an even

Regardless of this temporary outward affiliation with the Catholic Church, Kraus always was very conscious of being a Jew; his constant protests against being identified with Jews, i.e. especially contemporary Jewish writers, and his oft-repeated occupation with their problems only confirm that.

Kraus's view concerning philosophy. Kraus's concern with philosophy was not technical, and his comments were fragmentary. Although the *Fackeln* were full of the names and quoted sayings of philosophers, he was not interested in philosophy and quoted the philosophers as authorities on topics in which they were only secondarily interested. Thus, for instance, he cited Kierkegaard on the press, and Schopenhauer on the character of the Germans.[1]

Kraus felt compelled to deal in more detail with the philosophy of one man, Nietzsche, although he believed that not a single sentence of his would survive. Being alien to the very nature of philosophy, Kraus made an even poorer showing in those attempts than when dealing with any of the scientific disciplines. Nevertheless, because he was aware of certain points of comparison between himself and Nietzsche, Kraus returned to him again and again. Not even in his one passage about Nietzsche which is relatively connected, did Kraus penetrate deeply into his philosophy:

> ... dass er zur Mischung aus Elementen der Goetheschen Seelenrede, der romantischen Traumtöne, des französischen Salongeplauders, kurz der "zersetzten europäischen Stile ..." noch die Psychologie hinzugebracht hat und dass das neue Niveau der Sprache, das er geschaffen hat, das Niveau des Essayismus ist, wie das Heinesche das des Feuilletonismus. ... Ohne den grossen Atem polemischen Geistes ... immer von neuem Anfangen und immer Aufhörenkönnen ... Verbrecher von Lehren und Urteilen ... oft nur vereinbar in der Wurzel der Krankheit ... ist er rein sprachlich das Vorbild aller Kerr- und Zerrbilder einer Stilistik, deren Haupt- und Zeitwort das Adjektiv ist ... Das Nebeneinander dieser Ideen ... ohne Verschmelzung ... Wie schmerzlich, leiblich nahe ist uns doch die Erkenntnis gerückt, dass noch die Herdentiermoral erhaben über eine Moral ist, der das Herdentier zum Schlachtvieh taugt, und dass der letzte Wille einer sterbenden Menschheit nicht der zur Macht sein kann ... in zwanzig Jahren wird es keinen Satz von ihm geben ...[2]

Kraus implied that Nietzsche killed David Friedrich Strauss by his

greater extent than religion itself usually is. But if my reason was based only on the wish to leave the last semblance of community with the literary swindlers, I am sufficiently punished by the disappointment of finding them again just where I believed to be hiding from them. *Untergang*, pp. 365f.

[1] Die Fackel, 686–90 (Mai 1925), 2f.

[2] ... that he has also added psychology to the mixture of elements of Goethean language of the soul, of the sounds of romantic dreams, of the chatter of the French salons, to be brief of the "decadent European styles ..." and that the new level of language which he has

morality of the Superman and stated that the outcome of the Franco-Prussian war should have taught Nietzsche that the morality of the animal in the herd was superior to that of the one who slaughtered it. Kraus usually only made brief derogatory remarks about Nietzsche, as when he critiziced Nietzsche for referring to Schiller as "moral trumpeter of Säckingen (distortion of *Der Trompeter von Säckingen* by F. Schiller.) He believed that his own verbal humor was very much superior to Nietzsche's and that one could destroy the fiction of Nietzsche's power by criticism of his style.

Psychiatry. In *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität,* Kraus dealt at some length with psychiatrists, whom he considered sinners against *Geist.* At that time he did not consider them as dangerous as later, but rather as only one of the minor causes of the evils described in that collection of essays. Having mainly Freudian analysts in mind, he divided the psychiatrists into first, the wicked ones who put their scientific stamp on any crime for the sake of personal gains, and second, those who, in his opinion, were equally dangerous because they were unable in their stupidity to see the absurdity of their speculations. Kraus described psychiatrists in general as cowardly, feeble-minded, stingy, dirty, backward, pretentiously affected, and related to those whom they pretented to heal as convex to concave.[1] Hoping that mankind would come to its senses and bar psychiatry from all claims to scientific character, he quipped that it might be retained as an interesting parlor game or as a cult.

Kraus saw in psychoanalysis a threat to what he cherished most in human life, the privacy of irrational dreams and ideals which, as he knew, could be destroyed by much less than intensive analysis. While thus impoverishing and narrowing down personality, psychoanalysis was a threat to the ethics of society, "explaining" behavior and thereby doing away with responsibility.[2] Moreover, psychoanalysis contradicted Kraus's own pet theories on sex. To him, what made sex valuable

created is the level of the essay, as Heine's is that of the feuilleton ... Without the great sweep of the polemic spirit ... again and again ... criminals who "commit" teachings and judgments ... often only reconcilable in the root of the disease ... he is purely linguistically the model of all Kerr (a writer and critic whom Kraus frequently attacked) and Zerr (distorted) images of a style in which the noun and the verb are adjectives ... The existence side by side of these ideas ... without amalgamation ... how painfully close physically has the realization come to us, that even the morality of herd-animals is still superior to a morality which slaughters the herd-animals, and that the last will of dying mankind cannot be the will to power ... in twenty years not a line he has written will stand ... *Die Fackel,* 577–82 (November 1921) 62ff.

[1] *Sprüche und Widersprüche,* p. 114.

[2] *Pro domo et mundo,* p. 61.

and beautiful was essentially its separateness from rationality and the secrecy which had until then surrounded it as a matter of course.

Connected in Kraus's mind with his fears concerning the integrity of the human soul and the mysterious quality of sex, was the fear that artistic creativity would be devaluated, since anything lifting it above the level of daily life would be explained away. What was even worse, the psychoanalyst put art into a very humiliating, subordinate position:

> Eine Wissenschaft, die vom Geschlecht so wenig weiss wie von der Kunst, verbreitet das Gerücht, dass im Kunstwerk die Sexualität des Künstlers "sublimiert" werde. Eine saubere Bestimmung der Kunst, das Bordell zu ersparen! Da ist es doch eine viel feinere Bestimmung des Bordells, die Sublimierung durch ein Kunstwerk zu ersparen! [1]

> ... was gemeiner ist: die Reduzierung des Kunstwerkes auf den psychologischen Rest oder die Reduzierung der Erotik auf das pathologische Masse ... [2]

Kraus was extremely upset by the realization that Freud's psychoanalysis was constantly gaining prestige:

> Nervenärzten, die uns das Genie verpathologisieren, soll man mit dessen Gesamten Werken die Schädeldecke einschlagen ... allen rationalistischen Helfern des Normalmenschentums, die es darüber beruhigen, dass es zu Werken des Witzes und der Phantasie nicht inkliniere, trete man mit dem Schuhabsatz ins Gesicht ... [3]

He clamored against attempts to psychoanalyze Kleist, Lenau,[4] Otto Weininger,[5] Wagner, Nietzsche, and even Goethe who could not defend themselves posthumously. He must have felt the threat to his own privacy most keenly, and therefore his attacks on psychoanalysis were angrier than his attacks on anything else. Hence they are not likely to be quite convincing to anyone who, whether or not he has confidence in the Freudian method, believes that anything can be gained by taking psychological factors into account.[6] He saw in the psychoanalyst the non-artist, the mediocre person who attempts to explain

[1] A science which knows as little of sex as of art spreads the rumor that the artist's sexuality is "sublimated" in the work of art. What a clean purpose of art, to replace the brothel! Then it would be a much finer purpose for the brothel to take the place of sublimation by a work of art! *Nachts*, p. 74.

[2] ... what is lower: the reduction of the work of art to the (its) psychological residue or the reduction of eroticism to the pathological measure ... *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[3] Nerve doctors who ruin genius for us by calling it pathological should have their skulls bashed in by the genius' collected works ... one should grind one's heel into the faces of all rationalistic helpers of "normal humanity" who give reassurance to people unable to appreciate works of wit and of imagination ... *Sprüche*, p. 112.

[4] *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 61.

[5] *Die Fackel*, 169 (23. November 1904), 6ff.

[6] *Ibid.*, 668–75 (Dezember 1924), 148f. The reference is to an attempt to find the sexual foundation of "Der Zauberlehrling." (The Sorcerer's Apprentice.) (Cf. also *Traumstück*, p.17).

phenomena far above his own horizon: "Analyse ist der Hang des Schnorrers,[1] das Zustandekommen von Reichtümern zu erklären. Immer ist das, was er nicht besitzt, durch Schwindel erworben. Der andere hat's nur; er aber ist zum Glück eingeweiht." [2] Or: "Psychologie ist der Omnibus, der ein Luftschiff begleitet."[3]

Da aber das Genie eine Erklärung nicht braucht, und eine, die die Mittelmässigkeit gegen das Genie verteidigt, von übel ist, so bleibt der Psychoanalyse nur eine einzige Rechtfertigung ... sie lässt sich mit genauer Not zur Entlarvung der Psychoanalyse anwenden.[4]

To Kraus, far from accomplishing anything positive, the psychoanalysts belittled the human mind by reducing all greatness but not their own activities to sexual causes. The psychoanalysts differed from the old *Seelenkundler* (psychiatrists) by not condemning deviations from the norm, but by helping the inferior to gain self-assurance.

Kraus, who expressed these views also in poetic form in his two lyric plays [5] managed to live through that revolution of the science of the human mind, centered in Vienna, without the least understanding of its significance and cultural-historical implications. In accusing the psychoanalysts of being rationalists, it was actually Kraus himself, basically, with his lack of faith in man, not unrelated to the anti-rational trend of his time, who sounded like an eighteenth-century rationalist, when he dispensed with the whole matter by his wholesale rejection of the new science as "wickedness and stupidity." He laughed at the claim that some people might not be consciously aware of being in love and at the possibility of the existence of subconscious conflicts in general.[6]

By far the most frequently, however, he simply passed the problem off with a joke:

Die Psychoanalyse ... soll namentlich auf Amerikaner, die sich für alles interessieren, was sie nicht haben, wie Antiquitäten und Vorgänge des Innenlebens, einen unverminderten Reiz ausüben ...[7]

[1] Jewish jargon for "Beggar."

[2] Analysis is the inclination of the beggar, to (try to) explain, how riches come about. What he does not possess was always acquired by swindle. The other person merely *has* it, but *he*, fortunately, is informed. *Nachts*, p. 77.

[3] Psychology is a bus which accompanies an air plane. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

[4] But since a genius does not need explanation, and since an explanation which defends mediocrity against genius is evil, there is only one justification left for psychoanalysis ... it still manages to be useful for the unmasking of psychoanalysis. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

[5] *Traumstück* and *Traumtheater*.

[6] *Die Fackel*, 649–56 (Juni 1924), 66f.

[7] Psychoanalysis ... is supposed to be making an undiminished impression on Americans who are interested in everything that they don't have, such as antiques and an inner life ... *Ibid.*, 890–905 (Ende Juli 1934), 37.

Throwing overboard, as he often did, all fears of revealing his ignorance, Kraus laughed at the famous psychiatrist Wagner von Jauregg's claims of curing cretinism through glands,[1] spoke of "Nervenärzte und andere Laien, ..." [2] called psychoanalysis – "Dieses neueste Judenleid, die älteren haben noch Zucker –" [3] and pointed out triumphantly cases when the consultation of a psychiatrist was out of place,[4] or when the latter had made a mistake. He found ever new occasions and ways of exclaiming: "Schluss mit dem blöden Humbug, der die Menschheit so lange genarrt hat!" [5]

Kraus, not wanting to study human psychology scientifically and probably too independent to accept another's scientific theory, was bound to be attracted to Weininger's fantastic speculations on the genius and man of action types, especially since Kraus could identify himself with the genius who stood outside the world, was the embodiment of the spirit, and created history.

Complaints about lack of results. When his contemporaries did not become better in spite of his teachings, Kraus did not feel so much that he failed as that people were hard-headed, stupid, and unappreciative:

> Keinen einzigen Beweis ihrer Unheiligkeit, ihrer Ungläubigkeit vor dem Geist, ihrer Abhängigkeit von der Lüge, ihrer jovialen Bosheit, ihrer souveränen Niedrigkeit und der stupiden Qual ihrer Klischees haben sie mir bis zu diesem Tag zum Opfer gebracht ...[6]

The successes and failures of other people's efforts in the same direction hardly concerned him; in fact, he was usually convinced that, even when they claimed to be working for a cause, they were actually merely concerned with themselves:

> Ich spreche von mir und meine die Sache. Sie sprechen von der Sache und meinen sich.[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, 217 (23. Jänner 1907), 11.

[2] Nerve doctors and other people without any specialized training. *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität*, p. 339.

[3] This newest Jewish disease, the older ones still have diabetes ...*Die Fackel*, (Mitte November 1913), 18.

[4] *Ibid.*, 39 (Ende April 1900), 1ff.

[5] Let us be finished with this humbug which has fooled mankind so long! *Ibid.*, 183–84 (4 Juli 1905), 48.

[6] Up to this day they haven't sacrificed to me a single proof of their unholiness, of their scepticism before the spirit, of their dependence on lies, of their jovial wickedness, their supreme meanness or of the stupid torture of their clichés. *Weltgericht*, II, 299.

[7] I speak of myself and mean the cause. They speak of the cause and mean themselves. *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 167.

Exaggerated opinion of himself. Much more often than merely to justify his actions, and everywhere except in his poems, Kraus showed that he considered himself infinitely superior to anybody with whom he ever compared himself. He even attributed something like cosmic significance to his clashes with the world, going so far as to express dissatisfaction with its very physical structure. He was annoyed, for example, because one disagreeable face prevented one from seeing the whole horizon.[1] Since he said these things in a tone of playful irritability, they would not be taken seriously enough individually to seem convincingly integral components of his view of the world. Just as many people when in a bad mood constantly and unreasonably find fault with their environment, so Kraus constantly filled issues of *Die Fackel* with the fluent verbalizations of his annoyances. He often expressed his anger at seeing people he rejected on moral grounds engaged in activities of which he approved:

Es gibt Menschen ... auch wenn sie sagen oder tun, was mir richtig scheint, ärgern sie mich doch, weil ich nicht begreifen kann, wie denn so unrichtige Menschen eigentlich dazu kommen, das Richtige zu tun .... Es kommt ja vielleicht überhaupt gar nicht so sehr darauf an, was einer meint, sagt und tut, sondern darauf allein, ob er der Mensch dazu ist.[2]

As pointed out in the section on Kraus's use of language, he gave some words pejorative meanings and used them then to describe the characteristics or habits of others as contrasted with his own, as when he said:

Eine meiner schlechtesten Eigenschaften ist gewiss, dass ich im Gegensatz zu meinen Lesern mir nur ungern Meinungen bilde und dass ich meine, es sei viel besser, Eigenschaften als Meinungen zu haben ...[3]

One of those qualities which were exclusively Kraus's own in whatever sense he might have meant it, was his sensitivity of which he claimed that it transcended that of others:

Ich höre Geräusche, die andere nicht hören und die mir die Musik der Sphären stören, die andere auch nicht hören.[4]

Kraus was convinced of the unified structure of his work which

[1] *Sprüche und Widersprüche*, p. 76.

[2] There are people ... even when they say or do what appears right to me, still make me angry, because I do not understand how such wrong people come to do the right thing ... perhaps it isn't so important at all what someone thinks but only whether he is the right kind of person for it. *Die Fackel*, 387–88 (17. November 1913), 36.

[3] It is certainly one of my worst characteristics that in contrast to my readers I am very reluctant to form opinions, and that I think it is much better to have characteristics than to have opinions ... *Untergang*, p. 367.

[4] I hear noises which others do not hear and which disturb (for me) the music of the spheres which others do not hear either. *Nachts*, p. 205.

is sometimes hidden by the paradoxes of its foreground. Statements such as this:

Und wer von mir Aufschluss über die Sachen erwartet, hat sicherlich recht, aus dem Gedankenpferch zu fliehen .... Verweilt er aber, um ihn zu besehen, so wird er eine Architektur gewahren, in der um keine Linie zu viel, um keinen Stein zu wenig ist. ...[1]

seem strange to this relativistic age. Yet just this self-assurance, together with his sensitivity, are the sources of the strong impact of aphorisms such as these. In spite of their general wording, they suggest their origin as reactions to specific situations:

Wenn einer alle meine Ansichten hat, so dürfte die Addition noch immer kein Ganzes ergeben. Wenn ich selber keine einzige meiner Ansichten hätte, so wäre ich immer noch mehr als ein anderer, der alle meine Ansichten hat.[2]

The following is typical of his apparent paradoxes:

Viele haben schon meine Eigenschaften. Dadurch kann man sie von mir unterscheiden.[3]

Kraus made sweeping statements lumping together all contemporary literature as worthless trash – in contrast with one word or phrase from his pen:

Sie sind nicht imstande, einem Wort Leben zu geben. Wenn ich "Hugo Heller" sage, ist mehr Mysterium darin als in allen transzendenten Redensarten, die die modernen Dichter zusammenlesen.[4]

Such statements naturally called forth criticism: Kraus was accused of presumption, and that accusation in turn provoked numerous attempts at self-justification. Kraus was actually bewildered by a minor negative criticism of himself in an otherwise favorable essay.[5] In such statements he usually quoted such recognized authorities as Goethe: "Nur die Lumpe sind bescheiden," [6] or Schopenhauer:

Dass einer ein grosser Geist sein könne, ohne etwas davon zu merken, ist eine Absurdität, welche nur die trostlose Unfähigkeit sich einreden kann, damit sie das Gefühl der eigenen Nichtigkeit auch für Bescheidenheit halten könne ....

[1] And whoever expects me to enlighten him about things is certainly right in fleeing out of the "thought-pen" .... But if he stays to take a good look at it, he will behold an architecture in which there is neither a superfluous line, nor one stone missing .... *Pro domo et mundo*, p. 101.

[2] If someone has all my views, the addition is still not likely to result in a whole. If I myself didn't have a single one of my views, I would still be more than another who has all my views. *Nachts*, p. 71.

[3] Many already have my characteristics. That is how they can be distinguished from me. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

[4] They cannot give life to a word. When I say "Hugo Heller," there is more mystery in it than in all the transcendental phrases which the modern poets find by reading. (Hugo Heller was a prominent bookseller in Vienna). *Ibid.*, p. 210.

[5] *Die Fackel*, 679–85 (März 1925), 57ff.

[6] Only scoundrels are modest. *Ibid.*, 293 (Ende Dezember 1909), 22.

Diese Bescheidenen haben wahrscheinlich recht ... sie sind wahrscheinlich völlig verdienstlose Wichte, Fabrikware der Natur, ordentliche Mitglieder des Packs der Menschheit.[1]

Awareness of audience. His distaste for the faults and follies of his contemporaries extended, of course, to his audiences. In view of his professed low opinion of his listeners, there seems to be justification for those who criticized Kraus for bowing on the stage to audiences comprised largely of those he despised. Kraus was very much aware of his audiences, and, as those who lived through the Kraus era in Vienna will testify, was very much interested in the personalities making them up. In innumerable passages in *Die Fackel* he dealt with their behavior and their failure to come to certain lectures of his.[2]

Like a child who threatens his parents who do not appreciate him, he often threatened to leave Vienna, but various reasons always prevented his departure. Thus he said during the First World War:

Nicht Grenzschwierigkeiten, sondern die Pflicht, vor dem eigenen Feind zu bestehen, das Bewusstsein, im Ertragen des gigantischen Ekels den teuern Opfern auf dieser Seite nah zu sein ...[3]

prevented him from leaving.

Kraus's self-consciousness. Kraus was always aware of all the gossip about himself and claimed that for posterity's sake he had to reprint many of the articles about his current works or lectures. Obviously he was not aware of the contradiction involved when he triumphantly quoted the *Encyclopedia Britannica* passages about himself and added: "Ich darf noch bemerken, dass ich über Herrn Alfred Kerr in der Encyclopaedia auch nicht eine Zeile gefunden habe," [4] thus accepting "the world" as his authority. He even pointed out an article in the *Jüdische Morgenpost* which was favorable to him.[5]

In another *Fackel* [6] he wrote exclusively about his own performances of *Die letzte Nacht*,[7] of refusals to perform it, and of the injustice of the critics. From his articles on the contemporary journalists, one would

[1] That somebody could be a great mind without noticing it is absurd. Only the absolutely incompetent can talk themselves into believing that, so that they can also take their own feeling of insignificance for modesty ... These modest people are probably right ... they are probably fellows entirely without merit, mass products of nature, regular members of the common throng of mankind. *Die chinesische Mauer*, p. 304.

[2] *Die Fackel*, 676–78 (Januar 1925) 47ff.

[3] Not border difficulties, but the duty of standing up before our own enemy, the consciousness of standing by the precious victims on this side in bearing the overwhelming nausea .... Cf. e.g. *Weltgericht*, II, 190.

[4] I might also remark that I didn't find a single line about Mr. Alfred Kerr in the *Encyclopedia*. *Die Fackel*, 781–86 (Anfang Juni 1928), 74.

[5] *Ibid.*, 649–56 (Juni 1924), 141f.

[6] *Ibid.*, 613–21 (Anfang April 1923), 59–145.

[7] *The Last Night*. Epilog to *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*.

gather that those gentlemen were primarily interested in what Kraus ate and wore, and that they were in general envious of him. Kraus enjoyed his conviction that almost everybody hated him, with "the beams of their hatred converging on his small person... [1]; as much as he did the feeling of being admired by many, including the papers which did occasionally call him "ein grosser Mensch," "genial," etc.[2] He accused numerous writers of plagiarizing from him, and his work was full of pseudo-philosophizing passages about the public's attitude toward himself. About a caricature of himself, he remarked:

Wie der Künstler sich selbst in alle Gestalt trägt, so trägt eine Wirklichkeit, die ihn überflüssig gemacht hat, sich selbst in den Künstler. Um nicht vor sich selbst zu erschrecken, zeichnet sie ihn nach ihrem Mass und erschrickt vor sich selbst. Macht ein Bild von mir und trifft sich so gut ...[3]

The stature which Kraus gains through his courage and independence in thought and action is decreased considerably by the Don Quixoterie of his self-overestimation.

The fighter against the world. Kraus did not see himself as one person among many but as a lone fighter against the world. Believing therefore that he had clearly shown the utterly despicable character of Alfred Kerr, he scolded the world for its reluctance to take the logical consequences. He spoke, moreover, of his battle against it in which he believed that he was doing quite well, considering the greater strength of the world's weapons of violence. It is not true that Kraus was the only heroic opponent of the war: Friedrich Adler, and others risked their lives in their fight against the Habsburg regime. Romain Rolland and Stefan Zweig fought for peace, and who is there to say that Kraus's struggle was more effective than theirs?

This battle against the world was bound to be a losing one. Yet many people have wanted to see that they have molded the world for the better and hence have managed to see it in that way. Kraus continually searched for a position from which he could see himself as victorious or from which he could, at any rate, justify his failures. He remarked: "Ich stelle an das Theater Forderungen der Zeit aber auch des Geistes ..." [4] and thus explained why his plays never got beyond the premieres.

[1] *Pro domo et mundo*, pp. 32f.

[2] A great man, a genius. *Die Fackel*, 649–56 (Juni 1924), 130ff.

[3] As an artist carries himself into all creation, so a reality which has made him superfluous carries itself into the artist. In order not to frighten itself, reality draws his according to its measure, and shocks itself. It makes a picture of me, and depicts itself so well ... *Ibid.*, 381–82–83 (19. September 1913), 43.

[4] *Die Fackel*, 827–33 (Anfang Februar 1930), 85. I make demands of the time but also of the spirit on the theater...

In a pamphlet otherwise full of unjust accusations, Bin Gorion suggested that Kraus's work might have been more effective had he been more concerned with the object of his attack [1] than with himself as a fighter against it.[2]

Kraus in his world. Kraus's role was unique in some ways and great within a small sphere. He was very controversial, almost deified by some, influencing their lives in a daemonic way comparable only to that of some great religious leaders, whereas in others he aroused unbridled anger and hatred which sounded strangely out of place coming from the pens of sophisticated and polished Central European journalists.

Kraus's work was a critique of the age of the prosperous bourgeoisie under Franz Joseph and after, and of the Europe contemporary to it. This critique cannot be understood merely in terms of the scrutiny and rejection of various institutions and beliefs but implies the evaluation of a basic philosophy of life. His critique implies the rejection of the epistemology, the views of man, and the ethics of this age. Kraus rejected the optimism concerning human knowledge held by the late nineteenth century. The basic error of that period had been to think that both cosmological and ethical problems could be answered ultimately either by human reason or by empirical inquiry. The modern world had always believed that man was basically rational and that there existed a harmony between his reason and the universe as well as between his actions based on reason or on enlightened self-interest and individual and social happiness.

In Schelling's positive philosophy, nevertheless, as in Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard and later in Nietzsche and Dostoevsky the conception of a mechanical universe was discounted. This attitude dominated a great area of both scientific and artistic thought in the twentieth century. Even in the physical sciences, the faith in the mechanistic character of the universe was rejected as a result of the theory of relativity, quantum physics, and the resulting concepts of space, matter and motion, as well as the changed view of the nature of mathematics. The scientist saw in science a method which integrated phenomena into meaningful patterns for the purpose of human understanding and prediction, thus rejecting the idea that the universe followed anthropomorphic laws of causality. In the social sciences, too, a more indeterministic note appeared, men like Wilhelm Dilthey and

[1] Bin Gorion meant especially the press.
[2] Bin Gorion, *Der Fackel Reiter*, Berlin, 1932, p. 4.

Max Weber called for a method capable of taking into account spontaneity, intention, and volition in social life. In Freud's psychology, reason was considered as a manifestation of the irrational basis of consciousness. The fictionalism of Vaihinger, the "will to believe" of James, vitalism, and *Existenz* were expressions of this same attitude, also manifested in the romantic and symbolic literature and art of the century.

Lack of originality. Wholly unjustified, therefore, was the belief of both Kraus and his followers that these ideas were a unique contribution to modern thought and that Kraus was the only outspoken critic of his age. The ideas of Kraus formed a part of the intellectual tradition of the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. They embodied both the good and the bad characteristics of this tradition, which was marked by a growing distrust of the unbound intellect, a pessimism concerning the nature of man, and the awareness of the decay of our civilization.

Skepticism with regard to reason, similar to Kraus's can be found in Freud whom he rejected most violently, in Nietzsche and Wagner, toward whom his attitude was not clearly defined, in Karl Hauer and Otto Weininger toward whom he was favorably inclined, and, most directly expressed, in his beloved Peter Altenberg.

Political orientation. The twentieth century marked the decline of the economic position of the middle class with the development towards monopoly capitalism and the politico-economic decline of Europe, as well as the growth of powerful so-called extreme rightist and leftist authoritarian movements. Kraus shared with these movements his distrust of parliamentarism, and his belief that liberal democracy was inseparable from corruption.[1] With both the Austrian Christian Socialists and the Nazis he shared a distrust of the intelligentsia, of enlightenment, and of the press because of the conviction that it was unscrupulous and too powerful. It was therefore comprehensible that Kraus was one of the first to print articles of someone like Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Kraus evaluated politics from a metaphysical basis, namely the one identical with his fundamental demands, made upon the morality and the humaneness of the individual. Consequently, his view of politics was of a secondary domain, and came close to the principles theoretically underlying the Catholic Social Movement. This also makes it plausible why Kraus endorsed Dollfuss' authoritarian corporate state as the lesser evil compared to Nazi domination. For the

[1] Cf. p. 216, n. 1.

same reason he even, as pointed out, credited the strong personality of Lueger with the merit of cleaning up Vienna. Not because Lueger and his Catholic followers were antisemites, and not because he considered the upper middle class, including almost without exception the Viennese Jews, more money-minded, but rather because of his severe criticism of the human effects of liberal economic capitalism, of the press, and of rationalistic intellectualism, he was able to take sides with Lueger and his group.

Although both Socialist and conservative movements comdemned the capitalist system, it was the "right" which condemned both capitalism and socialism for their emphasis on the economic welfare of man and censured the age as an economic era. It was the pre-industrial age of the *Vormärz* rather than an egalitarian society of the future which Kraus idealized.

Kraus rejected the reliance, prevalent most of the time since the Renaissance, on the intellect and thereby the possibility that man might postulate certain directive values out of experience, in this way contributing to the skepticism of our time with regard to man's ability to govern himself by intellect alone. Thus whereas the Catholic Church, for instance, has an ultimate basis of action in biblical revelation and dogmatic tradition, Kraus aimed at an ultimate basis of judgement in his supreme values accessible through language.

In politics, while attacking liberalism and democracy with their lack of ethical responsibility, Kraus saw always, except in a brief period after the war, the only alternative to unbridled individualism in the authority of one good ruler. This ideal was close to the platonic ideal of a philosopher king, and was qualified by his holding on to the independence of jurisdiction, in spite of his severe criticism of individual judges, and of the institution of the jury. The difficulty connected with any such platonic ideal, namely the chance that even a "good" ruler may become relative to the *raison d'état*, did not constitute a hindrance for his thinking. Before World War I he was, as we have seen, even satisfied with Franz Joseph as head of the dual monarchy. Neither did he consider the possibility of a state in which individualism and social responsibility might be combined. The Anglo-Saxon system of checks and balances, with its aim at reconciling freedom with social responsibility, was alien to his thinking, and this strangeness towards political thought in this specific sense was even increased by the fact that he was essentially a moralist. Nevertheless, when he first encountered a dictatorship at close range, that of Dollfuss, he recognized it as an evil,

acceptable only because it seemed a lesser one than that of Hitler. Kraus's distrust of the intelligentsia, his criticism of the middle class and particularly its Jewish representatives, of the liberal press and the contemporary democratic tendencies were the consequences of a highly sensitive, but ultimately utopian demand on the human being. Because Karl Kraus failed to understand the function which the always relative and never ideal sanctions of legal institutions exercise in society, because he always fell back on supreme values and disregarded the mediocrity as well as the usefulness of all human institutions, he could become so sharp and penetrating a critic. But precisely for the same reason he gave himself the appearance of allying himself with other radical critics of the same society, critics who in the end were to bring about a totalitarian regime which was entirely opposed to his own conception of morality in private and public affairs.

The areas of his limitations and his greatness. It is difficult to appraise Kraus's work from the standpoint of truth since that would involve an evaluation of the basic ideals of the first half of our century. Any appraisal must, by necessity, include a subjective element. Kraus's greatness lay in pointing out the basic shallowness of an era of commercialization which rested on a false conception of the rationality and goodness of man who had been reared since the Renaissance on the belief in his own potential omnipotence. Kraus showed that man was not all-powerful, but essentially a puny creature, made even more puny by his faith in his increasing power. Modern man, in the age technology, had to realize that living was the prime purpose of life and that wealth constituted merely an instrument for living which was completely irrelevant when man was not aware of the basic meaning of life. The limitations of Kraus's thought lay partly in the very negative character of his work. Kraus did not his help followers to find a meaning in life. He exposed an age which had lost all faith in absolute values and reminded his readers of ages in which life had not been totally subjugated to commercial purposes, but he did not attempt to show how man could introduce meaning into the modern world. Kraus's message was essentially one of despair. According to him, the world was facing its end.

A criticism of Kraus which goes deeper is that he, too, much a part of his age, did not entirely understand it. Kraus was fighting in part against ideas and institutions which no longer played a dominant role. Among these were philosophic rationalism and scientism, a liberal political party, and a middle class from whose hands economic power had passed into those of giant corporations.

Kraus did not offer a recipe, philosophic or otherwise, by which to live; he had none himself. He wanted to instill in others the habit of thinking responsibly on the basis of the same fundamental values which were his and, as he believed, ought to be mankind's. The regression to ultimate values itself was a corollary of the emotion by which he expressed them. Together with his witticisms, his style therefore gives the impression of something irrational. In fact, however, the few decisive fundamental values in which he is consistent are rationally formulated and understandable, although they are always wrapped in the passionate faith by which he clung to them.

The essential merit of Kraus, however, was not a system which he might have left behind but a spirit of absolute earnestness and sincerity and integrity with which he sought to guide his contemporaries to the most intensive possible use of their faculties. In a very localized way he succeeded in giving a feeling of purpose to lives which no religion could have provided for them at that particular stage of development and in that locality.

Many of the problems which faced Kraus still face us today, and only the extent to which they are in the limelight has changed. Since Kraus started to write, contrasts have sharpened, and the contradictions of our civilization have reached a climax in the crisis which still confronts us. Hence we find in Kraus a viewpoint fresher than ours. He was still greatly surprised by the evils which we have come to take for granted and he arouses us out of our lethargy by calling phenomena by such lay words as "good" and "evil," unusual in men as complex, and as "modern" as Kraus.

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